

AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
NATURE AND GLORY
OF THE
GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST:
AS ALSO ON
THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES
OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS:
AND
THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF
DIVINE ILLUMINATION.

Designed as a Supplement to the AUTHOR'S Letters and
Dialogues on the Nature of Love to GOD, Faith in
CHRIST, and Assurance of a Title to Eternal Life.

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"We all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory
"of the Lord, are changed into the same Image.
"But if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost."
ST. PAUL.

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THE

P R E F A C E.

THERE are, perhaps, few, if any, among all the various sects and parties of professed christians, but that will readily give their assent to this proposition ; “ He who understands the gospel of Jesus Christ aright, sees it in its glory, believes it to be true, with all his heart, and is affected and acts accordingly, is a true christian, and will finally inherit eternal life.”—But put the question, *What is the gospel of Christ ?* And let each one for himself, learned and unlearned, throughout Christendom, prepare and give in an answer, and it will be found, that there is a great variety of opinions ; and that the learned differ as much as the unlearned ; and that the seemingly devout and religious, differ as much as the more loose and profane. The more any man acquaints himself with the state of the christian world, at home and abroad, the more he converses with men and books, the more clearly will he discern this to be the true state of the case. And now, *What shall be done ?*

To say, in this case, “ That notwithstanding circumstantial differences, the body of professing christians agree in the main, and we must not be so exact, metaphysical, and nice,” is the same as to say, “ Let your ideas be so general, confused, and indeterminate, about matters of religion, as that you may not distinctly discern the differences which do in fact take place : and be so very unconcerned about your eternal interest, as not to think it worth your while to look things to the bottom. Go on easy in this way, and cry out against and condemn, all exact thinking and clear reasoning in matters of religion, as *metaphysics* ; an *hocus focus* word, to
“ blacken

“blacken an enquiring disposition, and to justify an astonishing inattention, in a matter of infinite, of everlasting concern.” And this, while all men of sense agree to commend, the most exact thinking and clear reasoning, on any other subject, but that of religion.

To say, “It is no matter what mens principles be, if their lives are but good,” is the same as to say, “Paganism and Mahometanism are as safe ways to heaven as christianity.” Which is downright infidelity.

To say, “Good men may differ: there are more ways to heaven than one, all equally safe: ’tis needless to be at pains to look things to the bottom:” is much the same as to say, “Let every one sincerely live up to his own scheme, and he will be safe.” Which again will land one on the shores of infidelity.

When our blessed Saviour sent his apostles abroad into the world, it was with this commission; *Go preach the gospel to every creature, and he that believeth (the very gospel I send you to preach) and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not (the very gospel I send you to preach) shall be damned.* And according to this commission, they went and preached, and gathered churches, and then said, not from an uncharitable disposition, but merely viewing things in the light of their master’s words, *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* And when false teachers arose, and endeavoured to accommodate the gospel scheme a little better to the taste, the natural taste of mankind, the very chief of the apostles, as it were, stepped forth into the view of the whole christian world, and with an assurance and solemnity becoming one inspired by heaven, said, *But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed* Gal. i. 8, 9.

“But what shall I do?” says a poor, ignorant, benighted soul, anxious for his eternal welfare. “Were all learned, religious sort of men agreed, I should think, I might safely believe, as they believe. But now I am perfectly disconcerted and confounded. And is it likely such a poor, ignorant
“creature

“ creature as I am, should ever find the truth, and see to the bottom of these controversies, so as to know what is right, and what is wrong ? What shall I do ? ”

Were the differences subsisting in the christian world, really owing to any obscurity in divine revelation itself, I do not see how poor, ignorant people could be to blame, in being thus at a loss. Or indeed, if, after all, they should happen to believe wrong, to mistake some false gospel for the true one, I do not see how they could be to blame; much less so much, so very much to blame, as to merit eternal damnation. When, therefore, our blessed Saviour so peremptorily declares, *He that believeth not shall be damned*, let him be who he will, among all mankind, who shall hear the gospel, it is a complete demonstration, that in the judgment of our blessed Saviour, the gospel revelation is quite plain enough, upon a level even with vulgar capacities; so that it cannot be misunderstood, or misbelieved, by any individual, unless the fault is in himself. Yea, unless he is so greatly to blame in the affair, as justly to merit eternal damnation. To say otherwise, is to charge our Saviour with injustice, in denouncing eternal damnation against every unbeliever. Which, again, is no better than downright infidelity.

“ But how can these things be ? ” may an inquisitive reader say. “ For if the true gospel of Christ were so clearly revealed in the sacred writings, how unaccountable is it, that the christian world so greatly differ ? ”—Not unaccountable at all, only granting what must be granted, or christianity be given up, that the true gospel of Christ contains a system of sentiments diametrically opposite to every vicious bias in the human heart. Such a system it contains, or it did not come from God. And if it does contain such a system, then so long as the generality of mankind are under the government of their vicious biases, they will naturally love darkness rather than light; self-justifying error, rather than self-condemning truth; and it is well known how apt men are to believe that to be true, which they wish to have so, in other matters, besides that of religion.

Besides,

Tell me, whence was it, that, in the Apostolic age; whence was it, that, in the very days of miracles and inspiration, professed

fedded Christians began to differ? Was it because the sacred writings were obscure? Why then did they not enquire at the mouths of the Apostles, who were yet alive, and who all agreed among themselves?—Nay—Enquire at the Apostles mouths—indeed no.—They would rather call their inspiration into question, than submit to their decision. St *Paul* found himself so vigorously opposed by false teachers among the Galatians, that with all his miracles, inspiration, and elaborate Reasonings, he could not keep up the credit of his scheme, no not even among his own converts, who once were ready to pluck out their eyes for him; rather, in endeavouring to keep the truth up, his own credit sunk by the means, *Gal. iv. 16.* And a little before his death, after full experience of the nature of error and delusion, he plainly tells his son *Timothy*, that the case with some was really hopeless; saying, *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* 2 Tim. iii. 13. And while the Apostles were, some of them, yet living, numbers of their converts actually separated from their churches, numbers of their graceless converts, I mean, 1 John. ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.*

Now it cannot be pretended there was any want of external light and evidence, needful to discern and ascertain the truth, in that age; and nevertheless, matters began to work then very much as they have all along since. It is not therefore through want of light and evidence externally held forth, that men have gone into error, in one age and another, who have had the bible in their hands; but it has been entirely owing to the vicious state of their minds. And therefore St. *Paul* reckons *Heresies* among the *works of the flesh* and gives them a place along with *adultery, witchcraft, fornication, murder, drunkenness, &c.* as being criminal in the same sense with them *Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.*

And indeed the sum and substance of the Gospel may be reduced to two or three points, which must be in a manner self-evident to a mind rightly disposed; or to use our Saviour's words, to those who have a *good and honest heart*. For as all Christians were baptised *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy-ghost*; so right apprehensions of the character and offices of these three, is the sum of all christian knowledge:

ledge : for he who believes God the Father, the supreme governor of the world, to be by nature God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, infinitely worthy of that supreme love and honour, and universal obedience, which the divine law requires at our hands, and that consequently his law is, holy, just and good : and he who believes that God the Son, the express image of the Father, became incarnate, and died to do honour to the divine law ; was set forth to be a propitiation to declare his father's righteousness, that he might be just, and yet the justifier of the believer : And he who believes that God the Holy-ghost, is appointed to be an enlightener and sanctifier, to bring sinners to understand the truth, see it in its glory, believe, love and obey it : he who understands and believes these points, cannot fail to understand and believe all the rest. For, all doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion, naturally results from these fundamental truths.—Besides,

These fundamental truths give light to each other. So that if once the glory of God, the supreme governor of the world, is seen, the reason and nature of his law will be plain. And if that is plain, the design of the incarnation and death of the Son of God will be evident. And then the whole gospel plan will naturally open to view, and appear to contain a complete system of religious sentiments, harmonious and consistent throughout, perfect in glory and beauty. And while we discern the opposition of this system of truths to every vicious bias in the human mind, the nature and necessity of the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the holy spirit, to bring us rightly to understand the gospel, see it in its glory, believe and love and practice it, will be easily discerned : and at the same time, every one, well acquainted with his own heart, may discern the true source of all the various errors, which have been broached in the Christian world : for, the root of them all is in the heart of every child of Adam.

To assist the candid inquisitive reader to look down into the bottom of truth and error, and see things in their original sources, and in their mutual connections, that the true scripture scheme may arise into clear view, and the first spring of all the chief errors now in vogue, may be clearly discerned, is the design of the following Sheets.

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The reasonings are not built upon here and there a scripture text, detached from its connection with its context, to carry away the reader's mind with the mere sound of words; rather all the reasonings are at bottom founded on scripture facts, viewed in a scripture light; facts which cannot be denied without giving up our baptism and overthrowing Christianity by wholesale.—And a chief design is, to lead all parties, if they will but attend to the subject, to see that the great doctrines of the gospel are not disputable points; yea, so far from it, that there is no consistent medium between the antient Apostolic Christianity and infidelity.

The subject is noble, the design is good, the execution far as it is from being equal to so noble a subject, is presented to the candid reader's critical perusal and mature judgment.—With a becoming generosity overlook the blemishes of the manner, with the greatest eagerness attend to the matter, seek the truth, search for it as for silver, dig for it as for hid treasure, neither believe nor disbelieve, but in exact proportion to evidence: *To the law and to the testimony, like the noble Bereans.*

AN ESSAY, &c.

THE INTRODUCTION.

Containing an Invitation to study the Gospel of Christ; as it gives the most glorious Display of all the divine Perfections, that ever was made.

THE first and fundamental principle of all religion, natural and revealed, is this, viz. that there is a GOD, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being. And it is universally agreed to, by all who believe the inspiration of the holy scriptures, that this God is the Creator of all things; that in the beginning he created the heavens and the earth; and that by him were created all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him. And if there is a GOD, an absolutely perfect being; and if he created all things, then all things are his, by an original, entire, underived, independent right. And if so, it must of course naturally belong to him to take care of his own world, to order and dispose all events according to his pleasure: And the whole of his conduct in the government of the universe must be, of necessity like himself, perfect in wisdom, glory, and beauty: worthy to be admired and rejoiced in, by all created intelligences.—And if all GOD's works are glorious, much more must the work of redemption by JESUS CHRIST, the chief, by far the chief of all his works, exceed in glory.

It is evident from the whole tenor of scripture, that as GOD is by nature invisible, one whom no eye hath seen or can see, and into whose essence no created intelligence can look; so one chief design of all his works is to manifest himself, to exhibit the clearest and compleatest representation of all his perfections; and particularly, to hold forth to the view of the intellectual system, the most lively image of his heart, of his moral perfections: That, as it is above the capacity of finite intelligences to look immediately into his heart, and discern how he views things, and is affected towards them; they might hereby be enabled to form right conceptions of his nature, and so under advantages to behold his infinite, incomprehensible glory, so far as their finite capacities will admit.

The visible creation, the heavens and the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, with all the laws, order and harmony in the natural system, as they are specimens of almighty power, infinite wisdom, and goodness; so they may be considered, as a designed manifestation of these perfections, as inanimate pictures of the invisible glories, of the invisible GOD. But if we turn our eyes off from the material world, the meanest part of GOD's creation, to the view of holy intelligences, who were in a peculiar sense made after the image of GOD, here we shall behold living images of the living GOD. But still all this is finite, the inanimate pictures and the living images are finite; but GOD himself is absolutely infinite. These representations therefore, are very scanty, very deficient; and but a small portion of GOD can be known by them. Wherefore infinite wisdom hath laid a plan, in which he himself, as it were, may cease to be invisible, may come out to the view of the intellectual system in all his glory, in the person of JESUS CHRIST his son, who is the image of the invisible GOD, even the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person.—The veil is rent, the holy of holies is exposed to public view, and the glory of the LORD is to be seen by saints on earth, and principalities, and powers in heaven, in the face of JESUS CHRIST.—This manifestation therefore, of GOD in and by JESUS CHRIST, which is called the Gospel, is the compleatest and brightest exhibition

hibition of all the divine perfections that ever was, or that (perhaps) ever will be made. The inspired apostle might well then call the gospel, *The glorious Gospel of JESUS CHRIST*: as beyond all doubt the glory of the work of our redemption by CHRIST exceeds, far exceeds, in glory, not only the glorious works of men, or more glorious works of angels; but even exceeds in glory all the other glorious works of GOD himself.

While therefore men of the greatest genius think themselves well employed in contemplating the laws, order and harmony of the natural world, let us now, with the greatest attention and ardour, join with principalities and powers in heaven, in prying into the glorious mysteries of GOD's moral system, all presupposed or implied in the glorious Gospel of JESUS CHRIST.

And the rather, because it is possible, that while we live under the clear light of the Gospel, we may be blind to all its peculiar glories; and so never believe it to be true, nor reap any saving benefit from it; but be finally lost, eternally lost. For, as *St. Paul* observes, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the GOD of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them." Wherefore, while we search into the nature and glory of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, let us pray, that, "He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would shine in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. iii. 18. and iv. 3, 4, 5.

In these words of the apostle just cited, to which a special reference will be had in the following essay, these things may be observed.—That the gospel of Christ is a glorious gospel.—That the glory of the gospel is seen by all who sit under it, that are not blind: and all who see its glory do believe, savingly believe.—That those who are blind to the glory of the gospel, do not believe it: the gospel is hid from them, and they are lost.—That

the devil's grand scheme is to keep men blind to the glory of the gospel; as knowing, that this is the direct method to prevent their ever believing it, to the saving of their souls.—That spiritual illumination, whereby men are brought to see the glory of the gospel, to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, is as immediately from God, as was natural light, when God commanded the light to shine out of darkness; saying, *Let there be light—and there was light.*—That all who behold this glory of the Lord are changed into the same image.

These propositions are expressly declared, or plainly implied in the words of the apostle.—Wherefore let us inquire—into the nature and glory of the gospel of Christ—into the nature and consequences of spiritual blindness—and into the nature and effects of divine illumination.

S E C T I O N I.

A General View of the Nature of the Gospel.

THE word *Gospel*, signifies *Good News*. The good news comes from heaven ; from God, the great king of the universe. It was first more darkly hinted to *Adam* immediately after the fall ; and afterwards to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, by God himself ; and by *Moses* and all the prophets in God's name to Israel of old : but last of all, the whole glorious plan was fully brought to light, and published to the world by Jesus Christ, and his apostles.

And he, who will be at the pains carefully and critically to read the bible through, and take a full view of the whole account as it there stands, will find the following particulars, among many others, implied in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. That God is considered as the moral governor of the world ; that man is considered as a proper subject of moral government ; that God's law is considered as holy, just, and good ; that man has broken it, is without excuse, stands guilty before God, already condemned ; and is so far from penitence, that he is dead in sin, an enemy to God, and at enmity against his law and government.

2. That God did not judge it suitable to the honour of his majesty, or agreeable to the honour of his law and government, in a sovereign way, by the influences of his holy spirit, to bring man to repentance, and then by a sovereign act of grace to pardon him, and receive him to favour, and entitle him to eternal life, without a mediator and an atonement.

3. That God has appointed his own son to be a mediator, and made him a curse, to redeem us from the curse, that through him he might communicate the holy spirit ; and set him forth to be a propitiation, that through faith in his blood, we might receive forgiveness

of sins ; and yet God be just, and the honour of his law be secured in the sight of all worlds.

So that the doctrine of Christ's atonement, considered in its antecedents, effects, and consequences, is the sum and substance of the Gospel. This is the good news, that, " God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Joh. iii. 16. And therefore St. Paul sums up all in these words, *Christ crucified*, 1 Cor. i. 23. *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. and sometimes merely in the *Cross of Christ*, Gal. vi. 14. yea, in that one word, the *Cross*, 1 Cor. i. 18.

When the Gospel was first published to fallen man, it was in words to this effect, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*—but how *bruise the serpent's head*?—It was not then a proper time to declare in express language, but sacrifices were instituted to shew how, by way of emblematical representation, as they were types and shadows of the great atonement. *Abel* sacrificed; *Noah* sacrificed; and *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* offered sacrifice: and almost the whole external worship of God under the Mosaic dispensation, which was designed as an introduction to Christianity, consisted in offering sacrifice; and *without shedding of blood there was no remission*. And the meaning of all this was made plain, when the son of God became incarnate, that, " through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15.

How had *the devil the power of death*? It was the devil's original design to be the death and destruction of all the human race, perhaps, that in the ruin of God's new made world, he might be revenged for his expulsion out of heaven. He thought that if they sinned, they must inevitably die, according to the express declaration of God's law. He had lately felt the force of the divine law he was under. He sinned, and he was banished from the celestial regions down to eternal woe and endless despair. He tempted man to sin, that he might be joined in the same state. For if God will be so severe as to kill and damn for the first offence, satan's practice seemed

ed to declare, that he could wish God might have nothing else to do among all his subjects. So that when a fallen world was doomed to death, it was the very thing satan would have. And so death became, as it were, his servant. It served his will, it accomplished his scheme, and answered his ends, as though it had been in his power. God seemed obliged in honour to put his law in execution ; but in doing of it, he would gratify the devil, the greatest enemy to God, to law, and to the whole system. This was satan's malicious crafty scheme, and thus perhaps was he ready to say, - ' If law is put in execution, man must die ; and God will be disappointed of the glory of his new creation, and I shall triumph. ' If law is vacated and set aside in favour of rebel man, ' no more let the almighty monarch pretend to impartial justice ; as well might law have been set aside in my case ; my exclusion from heaven was an arbitrary act ; ' if arbitrary, then tyrannical ; and what care I for the ' wrath of an angry tyrant ? Hell will be no longer hell ' to me.' Wherefore, there was a peculiar propriety in the first promise being delivered to man in the form of a threatening to satan. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.* For it was a chief design of infinite wisdom to disconcert the devil's scheme, break up his plan, and so kill the old serpent in a way suited to his own nature. And what can cruciate him more, and put him to greater torment, than to see law honoured, and man saved, both at once ; and an eternal end put to his influence, in a way most honourable to God, and advantageous to the system ; whilst himself and all his obstinate adherents are doomed to everlasting fire.

But how can law be honoured, and man saved, both at once ? For this end Christ became incarnate, and placed himself in our room and stead, that *through death he might destroy the devil*, break up his scheme, set at liberty his guilty trembling captives, *who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage.* For he was made a curse to redeem us from the curse of the law ; set forth to be a propitiation, to declare God's righteousness, that God might be, and appear to be, just, while he justifies the sinner ; and so the law be magnified and made honourable, while the sinner is saved ; death turned into a blessing, and be

succeeded by a glorious resurrection, and a blessed immortality.

And thus the design of Christ's death, was to secure the honour of the divine government, and open a way for the honourable exercise of his grace in the salvation of sinners. And this is so plainly held forth in the whole of divine revelation, that it is, at least, in words, generally agreed to by almost all parties, however differently they profess to think in many other points.—*In words*, I say, for if in reality it was agreed to, all parties would soon agree in every other important article of the Christian faith.

It is true, there are some divines, who seem to think, that God might arbitrarily have set aside his law in favour of fallen man; and that even his own perfections obliged him to it; and to pardon and receive to favour his sinful creatures, upon their repentance, had there never been a mediator or atonement. Repentance and reformation was all the atonement they could make, and all that God could demand. "I affirm," says one, "it is an article of natural religion, that forgiveness does certainly follow repentance: if God be a merciful and benign being, he will accept the payment we are able to make; and not insist on impossible demands with his frail bankrupt creatures."*

But little do such divines think how their confident affirmations are really subversive of the whole of Christianity; for, "if there had been a law, which could have given life, verily righteousness had been by the law." Gal. iii. 21. If it had been "an article of natural religion" that any doings of ours could have in reason entitled us to the divine favour, verily God would have proceeded with mankind upon the principles of natural religion, and not needlessly have been at such an infinite expence, as the sacrifice of his son. For if upon the principles of natural religion, sinful man could obtain the favour of God, the death of Christ was unnecessary. Gal. ii. 21. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

* Mr. Nye, *Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 85. 86.

As this is St. Paul's reasoning, who certainly had a right understanding of Christianity ; so it not only confutes such affirmations as that just mentioned, which are cited and improved by deistical writers † in the cause of infidelity ; but also, at the same time, these words of the apostle precisely determine, what it was that rendered the death of Christ necessary in order to the justification and salvation of sinners. *The law was weak through the flesh*, (Rom. vii. 3.) i. e. through our depravity ; and although originally *ordained to give life*, (Rom. vii. 10.) was now unable to do it : for the law required perfect obedience on pain of eternal damnation ; “ As it is written, *curfed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* (Gal. iii. 10.) But *all have sinned*, and so the *whole would stand guilty before God*, according to the law which all the world are under. (Rom. iii. 9, 19.) This law, therefore, which was ordained to life, can now be only *unto death*. (Rom. vii. 10.) And there is no other law. So there is no law, which can give life. This rendered the obedience and atonement of Christ absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the universal ruin of the human race. For the law being *holy, just, and good*, (Rom. vii. 12.) must not be set aside. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law must fail : it must be all fulfilled.* (Mat. v. 17, 18.) Could men have answered the demands of the law, Christ's obedience and death had been needless : *for if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain.* So that this was the end of Christ's death, and that, but for which, he never would have died, his death being needless and in vain on any other account, according to St. Paul.

It is true, the divine and holy manner in which he went through his sufferings, exhibits a *glorious example* for all his disciples to follow, when they are called to go through sufferings in his cause. But as there would be no virtue in exposing ourselves to death, when not called to it ; so there could be no virtue in going through death in ever so heroic a manner in such a case. Rather it might be judged, that we fling away our lives, not

† Tindal, p. 354.

only imprudently, but very sinfully : and our example would be so far from deserving to be admired and imitated, that it ought to be publicly condemned ; to the end that others might hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly. If therefore our Saviour laid down his life when there was no need of it, there was no virtue in his conduct, nothing commendable in his example, nor worthy of imitation ; but the whole was a scene of deliberate wickedness. But thus it is written, and thus the all-wise God, whose judgment is always according to truth, viewed the affair, viz. *If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

To say, " That although righteousness does come by the law, yet Christ did not die in vain, as his death was needful to seal his testimony to the truth, as other martyrs have done ;" is not only expressly to contradict the Holy Ghost, (Gal. ii. 21.) But is even an affront to common sense. Other martyrs were sinners, and deserved to die ; for death is the wages of sin : but he was innocent and holy to perfection. And had he called for twelve legions of angels, and out of his enemies hands ascended to heaven in visible glory, it had been a sufficient attestation to the truths he taught, had he only been a prophet sent from God, to republish the law of nature. *But how then should the Scriptures have been fulfilled, which had marked him out for a sacrifice of atonement, to make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness ?* For he was, according to the plan laid in heaven, intimated in the sacred writings, to be " wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was to be upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed : For we all like sheep had gone astray, and the Lord had laid on him the iniquities of us all." Isai. liii. On this design, the son of God became incarnate, and for this purpose he died, and had it not been for this, the death of an incarnate God had been entirely needless. For thus Heaven has declared, *if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

Well therefore might the holy apostle sum up the whole of the glorious gospel in one word, WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED : For indeed, this was in effect the whole

whole of the good and glorious news they had to proclaim to a guilty world. It was long before decreed in heaven, that he should die ; it was *the determinate counsel of God*, from the beginning, that *through death he should destroy the devil*, break up his scheme, and thoroughly bruise his head. And for this, in the fulness of time, he left his father's bosom. For this he *became flesh*, and for this he entered upon his public ministry, characterized by *John the Baptist* at that juncture, the *Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world* ; the true antitype of all the Jewish sacrifices. For this he called the *twelve* from their nets, that they might be his witnesses to all nations. For this he went up to Jerusalem, knowing what should befall him ; and *how am I straitened*, said he, *till it be accomplished*. For this he went into the garden, knowing that his enemies would find him there : and in a view of the absolute necessity of his death for the salvation of sinners, he said to his father, *thy will be done*, and then voluntarily resigned himself up into his enemies hands, when he could have struck them dead, or had twelve legions of angels to have guarded him from their malice. *I lay down my life for the sheep. This commandment have I received from my father.* For him did God the father *set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just*. And for this the father loved him, *because he laid down his life for the sheep*. And to testify his love and well-pleasedness in the sight of the whole intellectual system, he raised him from the dead, set him at his own right hand in heaven, declared himself ready to be reconciled, and ordered repentance and remission of sins to be preached to all nations in his name. Nay, all power in heaven and earth is committed into his hands, that he might reign till all his enemies are put under his feet, and satan's whole scheme completely disappointed. For as he *loved righteousness and hated iniquity* with such fervor as moved him to interpose and die in this cause, to discountenance sin and magnify the divine law, bring glory to God, salvation to men, and so destroy the devil ; wherefore God hath " anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows." (Heb. i. 9.) " Given him a name above every name." (Phil. ii. 9.) and decreed, that " he should

“ see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.” (Isai. liii. 11.) That is, see as much glory to God and benefit to the creature, result from his death on the cross, as his soul desires.

Was his love to God, zeal for his glory, and for the honour of his government, and compassion to lost sinners, so great, as to bring him from his Father’s bosom, worshiped by all the heavenly host, to hang naked, tortured, insulted on the cross, and there expire in the utmost agonies! --- as great glory to God, as great honour to his law, as great salvation to lost sinners shall result therefrom, as to be equal to his love and zeal and pity, infinite as they were. For “ he shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.” He shall see the fruit of his labours till he says, “ it is enough.” But what can be enough in the eyes of such an one! What can satisfy a heart like his! whose regard to the honour of God and of his law, and to the welfare of lost sinners, was so infinitely great! “ Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive!”—But in the midst of all this, we have the highest possible assurance of his sincerity in saying, “ Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” John vi. 37. for these the Father gave him, they were *the sheep*, he loved, and laid down his life for; *the joy set before him*, for whose salvation “ he endured the cross and despised the shame;” these are *his seed*, the travail of his soul, for whom he was smitten of God, and in whose stead he became “ a curse, to redeem them from the curse, and that the blessing of Abraham might come upon them.”

Thus this is the sum and substance of the glorious gospel of JESUS CHRIST. “ We preach CHRIST crucified.” This was the glorious and joyful news the apostles proclaimed to a revolted, guilty world. And if to the Jews CHRIST crucified was a *stumbling-block*, and to the Greeks *foolishness*; yet to them who were called, Christ crucified was “ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.—But this leads us to take a view of the glory of the gospel of JESUS CHRIST.

S E C T I O N II.

A general View of the Glory of the Gospel.

THE Gospel is denominated *the glorious gospel of JESUS CHRIST*; and its glory is represented to be *divine glory*. For it is called "the glory of God, and the glory of the LORD. (2 Cor. iii. 18. chap. iv. 6.) The law, as a *ministration of death and condemnation*, is said to be *glorious*; but the gospel *exceeds in glory*, (2 Cor. iii. 7—10) because we have in the gospel a more full and bright manifestation of the glory of the divine nature. The glory of both is of the same nature, divine glory; but in the gospel it shines with greater brightness. Now the glory of the divine nature consists in infinite wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. These perfections are the beauty of the Divinity. But how are they manifested in the gospel?—It is true, the ends proposed in the gospel are very glorious, to bring glory to God, salvation to men, and destruction to Satan's cause: but how is the means glorious?—*Christ crucified*. How are the divine perfections manifested in bringing about these ends by the incarnation and death of the Son of God? This has been a *stumbling-block to the Jew*, and *foolishness to the Greek*; and yet is affirmed to be in an eminent and peculiar manner *the wisdom of God*.—But how? and wherein does the wisdom of God appear in the death of his Son? This is the point to which we are now carefully to attend.

It has been observed, that the death of CHRIST was designed to answer the demands of the law in our stead. The law had said, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." But by the deeds of this law "no flesh can be justified in the sight of God;" for by it all stand condemned as sinners. Therefore CHRIST was made a curse to redeem us from its curse; not because
it

it was a bad law : and so the fault in the lawgiver : but because the law was *holy, just, and good*, and mankind *without excuse, guilty before God*, as much to blame as the curse of the law imported. He was “set forth to be a propitiation to declare God’s righteousness ;” and so in his death he “magnified the law and made it honourable.” *Isai. xlii. 21.* But there is no wisdom in doing honour to that, which is not worthy of honour. —And therefore,

If the divine law was not holy, just, and good, and did not in its own nature deserve to be magnified and made honourable at such an infinite expence as the blood of the Son of God, how was it wise in God to give his Son to die for this purpose ? And if it was not wise, how was the divine conduct in this affair in any respect god-like and glorious ? if it was not wise, it was unwise. It must be unwise to be at such infinite expence, if the nature of the case did not call for it, if the law did not deserve such honour. And if there was no need of such an atonement in order to our pardon and salvation, it was no act of kindness to us. We might have been saved as well without. And if the law was in its own nature too severe, it could not be a holy, or a just act in God to require such an atonement in order to our pardon and salvation ; but the contrary.

It must therefore be laid down as a fundamental maxim, that the divine law in its full extent, and with all its curses, and that with respect not only to Adam in innocence, but also to all his sinful race in whose stead Christ has borne its curse, is really in itself, and in the eyes of God, holy, just, and good, glorious and amiable, worthy of having its honour secured by the blood of the Son of God. For there can be no glory in the death of Christ, if the law be not glorious. Rather, it must have been contrary to all the divine perfections for God to have given his Son to die, to do honour to that which deserved no honour. And the Gospel which brings us the news, instead of revealing the glory of God, would bring to light an affair infinitely and everlastingly to his dishonour.—For,

How must it appear in the eyes of all holy beings, if the law was good only with respect to Adam before the fall,

fall, but not with respect to him or his posterity since ; that Christ should be made a curse, to redeem not only Adam, but to redeem us from the curse : that Christ should die to make atonement not only for the *one offence* of Adam, his first sin, but the *many* offences of Adam, and of his sinful race ; even for every breach of that law, which curses every one, that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. If the law had not been in its full extent, holy, just, and good, with respect to a fallen world, surely a being of perfect rectitude and infinite goodness must have disannulled it, and not subjected his own Son in our stead to bear the curse.

If indeed we are a fallen, sinful, guilty world, (and if we are not, we did not need the Son of God to die in our behalf) it is not at all strange, if there should be many and great prejudices in our hearts against the divine law, which we have broken, and by which we stand condemned, blinding our minds to its reasonableness and excellency, and tempting us to think it far from being holy, just, and good. Nor is it at all strange, if Satan, who was banished from heaven by a like law, and is an avowed enemy to God and to his government, should desire to strengthen our prejudices against the divine law, and do all in his power to blind our minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine in our hearts. But only let our hearts be divested of prejudices, and in a disposition to approve that which is really excellent, and we cannot fail to discern the reasonableness and beauty of the divine law : For,

If God is an absolutely perfect being (and to deny that he is, is down-right atheism) he must be infinitely glorious and amiable in himself : and therefore he must be infinitely worthy of that supreme love and honour from all the children of men, which the law requires : and infinite worthiness lays a foundation for infinite obligation : and infinite obligation to love and honour God supremely, will render us infinitely to blame if we do not ; and infinite blame deserves infinite punishment ; exactly as the divine law, that perfect rule of right, has stated the case. And the more disinclined we be to love God, the more aggravated is our guilt : and if our inclination

clination to love God with all our hearts is what it ought to be, there can be no difficulty in the way. So that there is no consistent medium between atheism, and an acknowledgement that the divine law is holy, just, and good.*—And further,

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* If God is not an absolutely perfect being, in himself infinitely glorious and amiable; the divine law, which requires us to love him with all our hearts on pain of eternal death, can never be made out to be holy, just, and good. And if the law is not holy, just, and good, the wisdom of God in the death of his Son, can never be vindicated. The gospel must be given up. He then who denies the infinite amiableness of the Deity, as he is in himself, saps the whole Scripture scheme at the foundation. He must be an infidel; or if he pretends to believe Christianity, he must hold to a scheme full of inconsistency. We have an instance of this in Mr. Cudworth. He denies the infinite amiableness of the Deity, as he is in himself; and maintains, that there is "no loveliness conceivable" in him, but what results from his being our friend, "disposed to make us happy." When therefore we had made him our enemy by sin, he maintains, that there was no loveliness to be seen in him. Yea, that let our hearts be ever so right, it was "utterly impossible" to love him; even inconsistent with our original constitution as reasonable creatures.—The divine law surely then could not in reason be obligatory on a fallen world; it became a bad law, not fit for us to be under, as soon as ever we broke it: Which to say, he owns, is subversive of Christianity. What then shall we say? to say, that the law is "holy, just, and good," when it requires of us, what is "inconsistent with the original constitution of reasonable creatures," is the most glaring, shocking self-contradiction. But into this, Mr. Cudworth is necessarily driven, by his denying God to be, in himself, an infinitely amiable being. For if God is not a lovely being, when we have made him our enemy by sin; yea, if his very displeasure against us as sinners, is not a lovely thing, he never can be loved by us. If to hate and punish sin, is in God an unamiable thing, there is no beauty at all in his character, as will be proved in the sequel. If Mr. Cudworth will reconsider his own scheme, and with a sedate impartial mind look to the bottom of things, he will find himself obliged to alter his notion of God, or give up Christianity.—And if he should grant, that God is, in himself, infinitely amiable, all his objections
against

If this absolutely perfect, infinitely glorious being, who is by nature GOD, is the creator and preserver of all things ; if he brought all things out of nothing into being, and holds up all things in being every moment ; then all things are absolutely and entirely his, by an original, independent right. And if all things are his, he has a natural right of government over all ; and it becomes him to take the throne, and be king in his own world. Supreme authority naturally belongs to him, exactly as the divine law supposes.

When therefore he takes the throne, assumes the character of moral governor, requires all the human race to *love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their strength, and with all their mind*, on pain of his displeasure, to be testified in their being eternally forsaken of God and given up to ruin, he does what perfectly becomes him. His conduct is founded in the highest reason. For he is by nature God, and the original Lord of all things.

And had all the human kind, in mutual love and perfect harmony among themselves, (as also the divine law requires) joined with one heart and one soul, in a supreme love to the supreme beauty, and in an entire, cordial, joyful subjection to their Creator and supreme Lord, and absolutely perfect Sovereign ; and continued universally obedient to all the dictates of his will, which must for ever have been infinitely wise ; they might, as one united, harmonious, happy family, have always dwelt under the shadow of his wings, enjoyed his favour, his smiles, his blessing, and made eternal progress in all divine improvements, rejoicing ever before him, to his honour, and infinitely to their own advantage.

against my dialogues, must drop of course.—For, as soon as the sinners eyes are, in regeneration, opened to see things as they be, God will appear to be infinitely amiable. And then every consequence will follow, which, I say, does follow. He was sensible of this ; and so had no way left but to deny, that God is, in himself, infinitely amiable ; in which he has destroyed the only foundation on which a consistent scheme of religion can be built, and obliged himself to run into inconsistency and self contradiction. See Mr. Cudworth's Further Defence, p. 221—226.

And

And all this was but the very thing the divine law was in its own nature calculated to bring them to; for *the law was ordained to life*. Wherefore *the law was holy, just, and good*; and a glorious expression of the holiness, justice, and goodness of the divine nature, the very image of the Deity. And therefore it was worthy to be kept in honour by God's own Son. Besides,

When in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and all things that are in heaven and in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, he then created all things for himself, with a view to begin a moral kingdom, comprehending all holy intelligences, and to set up a moral government to last for ever and ever; the welfare of which must consist in and result from the knowledge and love of God, and mutual love and harmony under his perfect government: that is, in such tempers, employments and enjoyments, as the divine law was calculated to train them up unto. And as this holy kingdom was so large, comprehending all holy intelligences, and of such great duration, to last for ever and ever, its interest and welfare was, strictly speaking, of infinite value. It was therefore of infinite importance, not only as to the honour of God, but also as to the good of his great and eternal kingdom, that the honour and authority of that law should be maintained inviolate, which secured the rights and prerogatives of the Godhead, and the infinitely valuable privileges of all his subjects.

To break this law, in its native tendency, was to dethrone God and disband his empire, to introduce universal rebellion, discord and ruin in God's eternal kingdom. And had the first rebel had sufficient power and influence on his side, he would actually have dethroned God and disbanded his empire, introduced universal rebellion, discord, and ruin, into God's eternal kingdom. Yea, this is the native tendency of every sin, and the heart of every sinner, as I have largely shewn in another place*. Therefore to crush rebellion, to brand sin with eternal infamy, to establish the divine authority, to main-

* Sermon on the great Evil of Sin.

tain the divine law in all its honours, were things of infinite importance, not only to the honour of God, but also to the welfare of his great and eternal kingdom.

Therefore, when Satan and his adherents first began rebellion in heaven, although dear to God before their fall, yet love to being in general, love to God and to the created system, love to law, to virtue, to order and harmony, awakened infinite wrath in the Almighty against the rebels, excommunicated them from the church of the first-born above, banished them from that holy society, and doomed them to eternal darkness and woe; that sin might be pictured in all its infinite horrors in the hearts of all his loyal subjects above, that the infection might never spread in that world, but the honour of his authority, law and government, be more firmly established than ever, to the glory of his name, and to the everlasting interest of his great and eternal kingdom; and all heaven had reason to cry, *Amen, Hallelujah: Just and righteous are thy ways, Lord God Almighty.*

And if after this, rebellion breaks out in another part of God's dominions, is there less, nay, is there not rather greater reason, that sin should be equally discountenanced? or rather, that some more effectual method than ever should be entered upon to establish the divine authority, and secure the honour of the divine government? or must the divine law now be given up in favour of rebel man, even as the devil made our first parents believe it would, when he tempted them to revolt, saying, *Ye shall not surely die.* Let us stop and think a moment what would be the import of giving up the law in this case.

The law supposed, that God was really by nature God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious being, as it required us to consider and treat him as such. Our revolt was a practical declaration, that he was not by nature God, nor worthy to be glorified as God. To give up the law in favour of his rebellious creature, must therefore be the same, in effect, as for God to give up his own divinity, and ungod himself, in the sight of all his dominions, to gratify a rebel. Again,

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The law also supposed, that as God was the Creator, Lord and owner of the universe, and by nature God; so he was possessed of supreme authority, an authority infinitely binding, and infinitely worthy to be revered. To give up the law therefore, was, in effect, the same, as to resign his authority in favour of those, who had despised it, give a quit-claim of the universe, and tolerate a general revolt. As if God should say, "The universe is not mine, nor have I any authority over it; angels, men, and devils, are all at liberty: there is no king, and so every one may do what is right in his own eyes." For, to hold his authority merely on the foot of the voluntary loyalty of his subjects; so that whenever any revolt, they are at liberty, no longer obliged to obey; to do this only in one instance, is in effect, to relinquish all claim to authority over any, as founded in his Godhead and Lordship; which is in effect, the same as to quit his claim to his own divinity and to his own world, to gratify those who would gladly ungod him and dethrone him. In a word, for God to give up the law, which requires us to love and obey him with all our hearts, is practically to declare to his rebellious creatures, "Your disaffection to my character, and rebellion against my authority, is no crime; for I am not worthy to be loved and obeyed with all your hearts; for I am not by nature God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, your Creator, sovereign Lord and King, as in my law I claimed to be." And

To alter and abate the law, and bring it down to the taste and good liking of an apostate world, who were enemies to God and his government, enemies to the order and harmony of the universe, must be much the same, as for God to give up his law and authority entirely. For he must quit his supremacy, give up his rights and honours of the Godhead, justify their revolt, turn to be on their side, turn enemy to God and to his law, and employ his infinite wisdom and almighty power, to promote the schemes they had laid in consequence of their revolt, schemes suited to the taste of apostate creatures: and thus they must become *as Gods*, as Satan said, and the Almighty become their true and faithful servant. For nothing short of this
would

would suit an apostate world. But this is even worse than merely to quit his claim to the universe, and resign his government over it. As it would be bad for King George to quit his throne for the *Pretender*, and fly his country; but worse to become the *Pretender's* Servant, and be obliged to employ all his power to promote the *Pretender's* interest.

And if among God's revolted subjects, any of the rebels should imagine, that what the devil said, was true, *ye shall not surely die*: if any should persuade themselves, that it never was in God's heart to care at all for his own honour, or for the honour of his law and government, or to punish any of his creatures, for *despising the Lord* and *despising the commandments of the Lord*; or ever to inflict any pain upon any of his subjects, unless merely for their benefit: in a word, if any should imagine, that it never was in God's heart to regard or aim at any thing but simply the good of his creatures, be they virtuous or vicious; and believing God to be thus altogether according to their own hearts, they are well pleased with his character; and so verily think, that they are not enemies to God, in a state of rebellion, worthy of eternal death: and consequently, that they do not need a pardon, much less an atonement of infinite value to procure a pardon. All this is so far from arguing an atonement to be needless, that it rather serves to discover the absolute necessity of one; that God might give no occasion for these false and blasphemous notions of him and his government, universally to prevail, infinitely to the dishonour of God, and entirely to the subversion of his authority, while he is on designs of mercy towards a fallen world.

It is manifest from the whole tenor of the divine conduct from the foundation of the world, that he looked upon it, as of the highest importance, that the intellectual system should know, that the Deity is infinitely worthy of supreme love and universal obedience, and that the evil of disaffection and rebellion against the divine Majesty is infinitely great, and worthy of an infinite punishment; as he is in fact, by nature God, and Lord supreme. It therefore appeared in the eyes of God a glorious act, and infinitely becoming the wise Father

ther of the universe, originally to suspend the everlasting welfare of his new-made, innocent creatures, on condition of their supreme love to the Deity, to be manifested by an universal obedience to his will. And he judged it wise and righteous in him, as moral Governor of the world, to banish the first rebels from his presence into everlasting destruction. And in his eyes it was a most glorious display of all his perfections, when man had fallen, not to pardon one of all the race without a mediator of infinite dignity, and an atonement of infinite value; nay, rather to part with his own Son from his bosom, and deliver him up to bear the curse in our stead, and set him forth to be a propitiation to declare his righteousness, and let the whole system see his full resolution to punish sin, and maintain the honour of his law and government. And in this view, *Christ crucified* is the *wisdom of God*: a most glorious means to accomplish the most glorious ends. And in this primarily consists, the *glory* of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was a glorious display of the holiness of the great Governor of the world, to appoint his own Son to die a sacrifice of atonement, as hereby his infinite regard to his own honour, and infinite hatred of sin, was set in the strongest light.

And it was a glorious display of the Divine justice, as hereby it appeared, that he was unchangeably determined to punish sin according to its desert, and execute the curse of his righteous law, although his own dear Son, standing in the room of a guilty world, was the person to be made a curse.

And it was a glorious display of Divine goodness; for if the Divine law was so holy, just, and good, so exactly in the image of the Deity, as to be worthy of all this honour; then, to a demonstration, God was wholly right, and our disaffection and rebellion entirely groundless, yea infinitely criminal. And therefore mankind were not pitied as having been too severely dealt with. And while the death of Christ declares the justice of the law, and the righteousness of God in our condemnation, the gift of Christ to die in our stead, appears to be an act of grace, infinitely great, and absolutely free.

And

And while the Son of God stands clothed in human nature, and voluntarily appears as our representative, to die in our stead, as our second *Adam*, God appears to be a God of truth. For the criminal dies virtually in his surety. And thus the law is honoured, sin discountenanced, the sinner saved, grace glorified, and satan disappointed, all at once. And thus all the Divine perfections are displayed on the cross of Christ. And thus the gospel is a glorious gospel. But all this, only on supposition the law was a glorious law.—For,

Let it once be supposed, that the Divine law, which required sinless perfection on pain of eternal damnation of all mankind, is in its own nature too severe, and it will inevitably follow, (heaven forbid the blasphemy) that Christ in bearing the curse of this law in our stead, died a sacrifice to tyranny. And so the gospel, instead of being a glorious gospel, a glorious display of the wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness of the Divine nature, exhibits to view, the most shocking scene, that can possibly be conceived of: *Foolishness* in the abstract.

But if the law was holy, just, and good, glorious and amiable, and worthy to be so magnified and made honourable; and if the law be thus viewed and considered at once the atonement of Christ becomes *the wisdom of God and the power of God*, the wisest and the most effectual method to answer the most glorious ends. And thus the cross of Christ will appear *foolishness* or *wisdom*, according to the light in which we view it. As it is written, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Thus we have taken a general view of the nature and glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And the way being thus prepared, we proceed to take things into a more particular consideration in the following sections.

S E C T I O N III.

The Divine Law holy, just, and good, a glorious Law antecedent to a Consideration of the Gift of Christ, and the Work of Redemption by him.

IF the moral character of the deity, which consists in holiness, justice, and goodness, is glorious and amiable; and if the divine law is after his own image, a transcript of his nature, holy, just, and good, it must be glorious and amiable too: and that the divine law is holy, just, and good, the apostle Paul expressly affirms, in the *seventh chapter* of his epistle to the *Romans*, ver. 12.

Would we know what law the apostle speaks of in that *verse*, let us read through that epistle, and his epistle to the *Galatians*, in which he is speaking of the same law; and we shall find these things said of it. It is that law which the Jews had written in a book, and the Gentiles written in their consciences. It *revealed the wrath of God from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. By this law is *the knowledge of sin*. It requires us to *continue in all things in it to do them*. It promises, that *the man that doth the things contained in it shall live*. But *curses every one that continueth not in all things*. And according to it, *both Jews and Greeks are under sin: every mouth is stopped, and the whole world stand guilty before God*. Each one *without excuse*. Rom. i. 18—21. Chap. ii. 14. Chap. iii. 9—20. Chap. vii. 7—12. Chap. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10—12. And from the whole tenor of divine revelation, we learn, that it requires us to love God with all our heart, and yield a perfect and persevering obedience to his will on pain of eternal death.

That this law, with respect to mankind in their present state, is holy, just, and good, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ and the work of redemption by him, is certain from two *indisputable facts*.

First FACT.—That all mankind, in their natural state, are, by God, the judge of all the earth, considered as
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under it, and held bound by it. That this is the case, is plain : For—We cannot be guilty before God for the breach of a law, which in his sight we are not under : but for the breach of this law, the whole world stand guilty before God : therefore the whole world in the sight of God are under the law, Rom. iii. 19.—No man can be entitled to life by obeying a law which he is not under : but whosoever obeys this law is expressly intitled to life : therefore every man is under it. Rom. x. 5.—No man is liable in the sight of God to the curse or penalty of a law which he is not held bound by : but God declares, that every christless sinner is actually under the curse of the law : therefore every christless sinner is held bound by it. Gal. iii. 10. Joh. iii. 18, 36.—Thus the fact is plain, that all mankind, in their natural state, are, by God, the judge of all the earth, considered as under it, and held bound by it. But from the absolute perfection of the divine nature we may be certain, that the judge of all the earth cannot but do right. It is inconsistent with the holiness, justice and goodness of his nature, and therefore morally impossible he should hold his creatures bound by a law, unless it were holy, just and good. This law is therefore holy, just and good.

SECOND FACT.—That God has given his own son, to be made a curse, to redeem us from the curse of this law. But it had been inconsistent with every one of the divine perfections, to have given his son to be made a curse, to redeem us from the curse of a law, which in justice, we could not have been held bound by, if Christ had never died.

WHOEVER will think of this, and thoroughly weigh it in his mind, will feel himself obliged, either to acknowledge the law to be holy, just and good, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ ; or to give up law and gospel both together : for God's giving his son to die, to redeem us from the curse of the law, is the greatest proof of its goodness, which could possibly have been given by the father or son. The fact must be denied, therefore, or the consequence must be granted. We must say, that Christ was not made a curse, to redeem us from the curse of the law, or we must grant the law

was good ; for to say, that God the father gave his son, to be made a curse, to redeem us from the curse of a bad law, is worse than infidelity ; nay, worse than downright atheism : for to believe that God is an almighty tyrant, that would put his creatures under an unrighteous law, and then appoint his son to bear its curse in their room, is worse than to believe there is no God at all. —The goodness of the divine law must be granted therefore, or we shall find no where to stop on this side infidelity. —But, I mean, at present, to reason only with those who grant the scriptures to be the word of God. And to these, I presume, the argument must be conclusive. —But

I. IF the divine law is holy, just and good, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ, and work of redemption by him ; then the divine law is a glorious and amiable law, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ, and work of redemption by him. For if holiness, justice and goodness, are glorious and amiable attributes, as they are in God, the original ; then they are glorious and amiable attributes, as they are in the divine law, which is his image, and a transcript of his nature. If the original is lovely, the image is lovely also. To say otherwise, plainly implies a contradiction. —Besides, if holiness, justice and goodness, are not glorious and amiable properties ; then God himself is not a glorious and amiable being. And if God is not a glorious and amiable being, he ought not to be viewed and loved as such. Which to say, is to overthrow natural and revealed religion both at once. There is no consistent medium therefore between renouncing all religion, and granting the divine law to be glorious and amiable, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ, and work of redemption by him. — But,

II. IF the divine law is a holy, just, good and glorious law, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ ; then it must of necessity appear such, to every one, whose eyes are opened, to see it, as it is. That is, to every one, that is not spiritually blind. For, if it is, in fact, a glorious law, in itself ; it must appear so to every one, who sees it as it is ; and it must begin to appear so, as soon as it begins to be seen as it is. And he that does not so much as begin to see the divine law as it is, is evidently altogether spiritually blind. God has not as yet
begun

begun to open his eyes, but the veil is still all over his heart; and enmity to God, and his law, has full possession of his soul. *

To say, "That it is impossible the law should appear glorious to me, before I believe my self delivered from its curse;" is either to say, that the law antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ, was not a glorious law: or else, that a man whose eyes are opened, cannot possibly see it, to be what it is. But if it was not a glorious law, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ, it is certain Christ never would have been given, to redeem us from its curse. And if men do not see it to be, what it is, it is certain they are blind: for this is the very thing that is meant by blindness in this case.

THE truth is, those who view the law as being glorious, only under the notion, they are, or shall be delivered from its curse, are as blind to its real beauty, as the most stupid sinner in the world. It is just as if a man should pretend to love a tyrant, merely because he is

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dead.

* These four points must be insisted on (1.) that the divine law is holy, just, good and glorious, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ (2.) that it is seen to be such by every enlightened soul, (3.) that in this view Christ crucified is seen to be the wisdom of God, (4.) that without this view, the wisdom of God in the death of his son, cannot be seen.—But whether the glory of the law is seen, in order of time, before the glory of the atonement, need not be insisted on. If things are seen in their true nature, and in their true arrangement, it matters not, whether they come into view gradually or instantaneously. They may in some instances, come into view gradually, and very distinctly; and in some, as it were, instantaneously, and less distinctly. Some may have a greater degree of spiritual light at first, and others a less degree. Some may have a distinct remembrance of their views and exercises, and others not.—It matters not as to these things, if men do but know and love and obey the truth in sincerity, they are christians.—But if the truth is hated and opposed, and errors substituted in its room; if the divine law be denied to be glorious; if it fills me with hatred and heart rising; if my heart risings are allayed merely in a belief that I am delivered from the curse; if this belief is the only ground of my love and joy, and of all my religion; I am not a christian; I am an antinomian; an enemy to the divine law, and to the cross of Christ.

dead. And although they may be ravished to think Christ died for them, yet the real purport of his death, never once came into their view. And had the law, in reality, been no otherwise than it appears to them, Christ never had died to redeem any man from its curse. For had it not been good and glorious, antecedent to his interposition, he never would have interposed. For he did not die, because the law was bad, to rescue us from its unrighteous curse, and pacify our angry minds: but he died, because it was good, to do it honour, and answer its demands in our stead, to the end, that God, consistently with his honour, might, by his holy spirit, take the veil from our hearts, and bring us to see the glory of his law, and heartily repent of all our hard thoughts of God and of his government, and in this way be forgiven simply on Christ's account, and through faith in his blood. And this is that repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, which St. Paul preached to the world.

HE who never viewed the divine law as glorious and worthy to be magnified and made honourable, never once understood the design of Christ's mediation, or the purport of his death, or the nature of his righteousness and atonement, or saw the glory of the gospel, or indeed truly knows any thing about the way of salvation through his blood; as will be proved in the sequel.

OBJECT "To view the law as glorious, antecedent
 "to a consideration of the grace of the gospel, implies,
 "that it appears a glorious thing in God to punish sin
 "according to its desert, with application to my self:
 "but this is inconsistent with that principle of self-pre-
 "servation originally implanted in human nature when
 "innocent: and so in its own nature is impossible,
 "and therefore cannot be a duty. And therefore to be
 "blind to the beauty of the divine law thus viewed,
 "cannot be of a criminal nature: nor can I be obliged
 "to look upon the law, as glorious, only in conse-
 "quence of the grace of the gospel.

ANSW. 1. This objection, if there be any weight in it, is subversive of all religion, natural and revealed, in Heaven and on earth. For a disposition to punish sin according to its desert, is an essential part of that character

rafter of God, which is exhibited in law and gospel, and in the whole of the divine conduct, from the expulsion of the sinning angels out of Heaven, down to the last sentence which will be pronounced on the wicked at the day of judgment. And if, with application to my self, this character does not appear glorious, for the very same reason it cannot appear glorious to me, with application to any other being, if my heart is as it ought to be, for I ought to love my neighbour as my self. And my neighbour's happiness is worth as much as my own, and his eternal misery as dreadful a thing as mine would be. Therefore if it is inconsistent with that love I owe to my self, to view the divine law as glorious, antecedent to a consideration of the grace of the gospel, it is also inconsistent with that love I owe to my neighbour. The moment, therefore, the sinning angels were doomed to eternal misery, it behoved all the angelic world, on this hypothesis, to revolt: nor could any thing ever reconcile them to the deity, but his delivering satan and his associates from the curse. And the moment God told Adam he should die, if he sinned, it behoved him to look upon God as an hateful being, for making such an unmerciful law: and had he been of the same temper we are naturally of, it would have appeared to him impossible to love that character of the deity, which was exhibited to his view in this law. And unless God does, after the day of judgment, reverse the final sentence, *depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*, it will behove angels and saints, who ought to love their neighbours as themselves, for ever to look upon God, as an hateful being, while they view the damned, their fellow-creatures, tormented by him in the lake of fire and brimstone, for ever and ever.—If therefore all beings in the intellectual system felt, as the objector appears to do, all would join with him in enmity to the divine character through Heaven, Earth, and Hell.

To say in this case, "If I am elected, redeemed, pardoned, and finally made eternally happy, I can love God, although others are damned, who deserve it no more than I do,"—is to declare, "that although I hate the character of the deity, and care not what becomes of my fellow-creatures, yet as I love my self,

“ if I am happy, I am content.” Which is really to declare my self destitute of all godliness and humanity, and under the entire government of self-love.—But,

2. The objection is founded on an hypothesis which is contrary to plain fact; viz. that it is inconsistent with that love which created intelligences owe to themselves, to view it as a glorious thing in God to punish sin according to its desert.—For, (1.) It, in fact, appeared a glorious thing in God, to punish sin according to its desert, to the angels that stood, that very moment satan was driven out of Heaven down into an eternal Hell, and that with application to themselves. For there was not one of them, but was ready to say from the bottom of his heart, “ It is a glorious act in God to punish those rebels as he has done; and it would have been as glorious an act in God to have punished me in like sort, had I joined in their rebellion.” (2.) It, in fact, appeared to Adam, before the grace of the gospel was revealed, that it would be a glorious thing in God to punish him according to law, if he should sin. For otherwise the character of God exhibited to his view in the law he was under, had not appeared glorious in his eyes. (3.) It will, in fact, appear at the day of judgment a glorious thing in God to punish the wicked according to their desert, to all holy beings, and that in perfect consistence with the highest exercises of the purest benevolence.—Besides,

3. If it is not a glorious thing in God to punish sin according to its desert, there is no glory in the cross of Christ, in which sin was punished according to its desert, in the sinner’s representative, the son of God incarnate.—Nay,

4. If the law does not appear glorious, antecedent to a consideration of the grace of the gospel, the grace of the gospel cannot be seen. For the relief granted to us in the gospel is of grace, of mere pure grace, simply on this ground, that the divine law is holy, just and good, a glorious law, in it self. For had it not been such, God had been obliged in justice to have granted us some relief.—Besides,

5. LET a man, blind to the glory of the law, be ever so fully assured in his own mind, that he is delivered

ed from the curse, although it may allay his heart risings, because he is safe himself, and because he cares little what becomes of others; yet it has in its own nature, not the least tendency to reconcile him to the divine law, or to the divine character therein exhibited. If God's pardoning my sins were the grounds of the law's loveliness, then a belief of pardon might convince me of the loveliness of the law. But the law is as lovely if I am punished, as if I am pardoned; for it is, what it is. And granting pardon cannot render a bad law, good; belief of pardon therefore only pacifies the angry mind of a guilty sinner, but has no tendency to convince him that the law is in itself good; witness the Pharisees in our Saviour's day, who, notwithstanding their assurance of Heaven, were most inveterate enemies to the divine character exhibited in the law, which character was exemplified in the life of Christ. *They have both seen and hated both me and my father*, John xv. 24.—Witness also all open professed antinomians, of the devoutest sort, who profess the highest assurance of the love of God, and at the same time appear the most avowed enemies to the divine law.—Nay, an assurance of pardon in this case, always confirms the native enmity of the heart to the divine law, as is plain from this: let one of these people be convinced, they are in an unpardoned state, and be awakened to some sense of the dreadfulness of eternal damnation; and their disposition to murmur and blaspheme, will be great in proportion to the greatness of their former confidence. Thus the Israelites, who, after the giving of the law, setting up the tabernacle, and approaching to the borders of the promised land, had their confidence of arriving there raised to its greatest height, now were prepared on their disappointment, when the spies returned, to feel worse toward God than ever they had done before.—Besides,

6. If instead of its being owing to the badness of our hearts, it is in the nature of things, impossible that the law should appear glorious, and the divine character therein exhibited, antecedent to a consideration of the grace of the gospel, then, contrary to the express words of the apostle, the Gentiles, who never heard of the gospel, are not without excuse, in their want of con-

formity to the divine law, in their ungodliness, *in their not glorifying God as God*, Rom. i. 18,—21. For they have a very good plea to make for themselves; an excuse that will fully justify them. For, as the objector rightly supposes, that kind of impossibility, which is owing to nothing bad in us, takes away all blame. Therefore, every mouth is not stopped, neither doth the whole world stand guilty before God, as to this particular. And thereupon St. Paul's gospel, which is built on this foundation, is overthrown, if this objection is allowed to be of weight.—And what is here said of the Gentiles, may be equally said of every impenitent sinner, who as yet knows not that he shall be ever the better for the grace of the gospel, in the world to come. According to the objection, it is impossible, and therefore it is not the duty of such to love God; and their not loving him is no crime; and so Christ did not die to make atonement in this case, nor are we to repent, or to ask God to forgive us. All this will follow, if it be no crime for a sinner not to love God and his law, while as yet he knows not but that he shall perish for ever.*
—And,

IF

* To avoid these consequences, a late author, who affirms, that the divine law requires what is "utterly impossible." Yea, what implies "love to our own eternal destruction," and so is "inconsistent with our duty, contrary to our original constitution, and to the law of God." Yet at the same time, maintains that this very law is "holy, just, and good," binding on all mankind. By holy, just, and good, he seems to mean precisely the same thing, that other people do by unholy, unjust and cruel; and accordingly he affirms, that, "no loveliness conceivable," can be discerned in that character "of the deity, which is exhibited in his law, and that it is "utterly impossible," to love it.—However he also affirms, that all mankind "ought to love it, and are self-condemned if they do not." And that although it is not owing to the badness in our hearts that we do not; yea, although, it is in its own nature, "utterly impossible, inconsistent with our duty of self-preservation and love to ourselves," and so in its own nature, "contrary to our original constitution, and to the law of God."—A remarkable scheme of religion this! ---Query,---Can there be any sin, or can we be self-condemned,

7. If we are justifiable in our native dislike to God's law, if we are not to blame for being enemies to the divine character therein exhibited, then to be reconciled to this character of God, is no man's duty, and so is no part of religion. A man may be a good man, and yet an enemy to that character of God which is exhibited in the law. Yea, perfectly holy, while he perfectly hates it.—And so regeneration becomes a needless thing. For there is no need of a new, divine, spiritual principle to be begotten in us, to enable us to love God simply under the notion of a benefactor. For it was our Saviour's maxim, *that Sinners love those that love them.* If the divine character as exhibited in the divine law is not to be loved, there is nothing in revealed religion but what we can love, without any other principles than those which are natural to us. We therefore on this hypothesis are not fallen creatures, nor do we need to be born again. All we need, is a revelation that God loves us, and will make us for ever happy. The Redeemer and the Sanctifier may both be left out of the account. So bad a law deserves no honour; and let that be set aside, and God love us, and we shall naturally love him, without any special influence from above.—And thus the whole gospel of Jesus Christ is overthrown.

ed, in not loving a character, which has no loveliness in it? ---Can that law be holy, just, and good, which requires us, on pain of eternal damnation to do that which is in itself sinful, "contrary to the law of God?---Yea, rather, is not that a wicked law, which requires us to do a wicked thing, to do what is "contrary to the law of God?"---Is not that a tyrannical law, which requires us to do that which is impossible, not through the badness of our hearts, but "utterly impossible," let our hearts be ever so good, "contrary to the original constitution of reasonable creatures?---Would not the holy one of Israel have been obliged, in honour to himself, to have laid aside such an unreasonable, sinful, wicked, tyrannical law, had there never been a mediator?---Would it not be inconsistent with every perfection of the divine nature, to give his son, to become incarnate by his life and death, to shew the greatest respect and do the greatest honour to such a law? ---Does not antinomianism lead directly to infidelity? See Mr. Cudworth's *Further Defence of Theron and Aspasio*, p. 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227.

But

But it is a plain case, that it was not originally the duty of finite intelligences to love themselves in such sort, as to look upon it an unamiable thing in God, to punish them according to their crimes, in case of their revolt. This would suppose, that it was originally their duty to be enemies to God's government. This kind of self-love is peculiar to apostate creatures; and instead of being a duty, is of the nature of sin. Instead of being innocent, it is pregnant with enmity against God's true and real character. It ought therefore to be called by the proper name, which God has given it, a carnal mind; not the least tincture of which belonged to the original constitution of an innocent creature. *For the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.*—Or, if we would give it another name, we may call it pride. For what is it but pride, for a sinner to think himself so good, and of such vast importance, that God must forfeit his character, and cease to be lovely, if he only punishes him according to his desert? would it not be accounted pride in a murderer, to think the chief Judge must lose his own character, if he pronounces the sentence of death upon him? that is if he does, what in the eyes of every impartial man, it becomes him to do? and would it not be a full proof of a proud, haughty, impenitent, inimical spirit, in a traitor on the gallows, if when urged to say, "God save the King;" he should reply, it is impossible for me to wish the king prosperity, so long as I am doomed to die?" when in reason he ought to take the blame of his ruin wholly to himself. Nor has he any ground to dislike his king and country, or be the less benevolent toward them, because he is punished according to his desert. Rather he ought to go out of the world; saying, "let all his subjects love and obey their most gracious sovereign, although I receive my just desert, and am hanged for my treason." For his king is as worthy of the universal love and obedience of his subjects, as if he had never been so wicked as to bring himself to such a miserable end. And nothing but a criminal state of mind can prevent its appearing so to him. And if God's law is holy, just and good, the application is easy.—But to all this, I may add, what would alone of itself

have been a full answer to the objection, that St. Paul does the supposed impossible deed, viz. pronounces the law, in contradistinction from the gospel, even *as a ministration of death and condemnation* to be glorious. 2 Cor. ii. 7, 9.—But to proceed.

III. If the divine law was holy, just and good, a glorious law, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ, then this apostate world might justly have been held bound by it for ever, and no relief provided. God was no more obliged in point of justice, to provide relief for fallen man, than for fallen angels. In this respect we stood on a par with them. Our revolt did not render God less amiable in himself, or less worthy of our obedience, nor in the least free us from our original natural obligations to love him with all our hearts, and yield a perfect obedience to his will. If our inclination to love and obey God ceased, yet as his worthiness of our love and obedience remained, our obligations were in full force, and the law was as reasonable and equitable after our fall as before. And so he was absolutely at liberty, in point of justice, to have held us bound by law, and never have provided any relief for any of the human race.*— And

If

* But on the other hand, if there is no loveliness in the divine nature, but what results from his being my friend, then I cannot be obliged to love God, unless he is my friend; for I cannot be obliged to love a being who has no loveliness in his nature. If there is no loveliness in God, it is no sin, but rather a duty, to think there is none, and feel accordingly. And so, if mankind, by the fall, lost the favour and friendship of God, and fell under his wrath, then, on this hypothesis, their obligation to love him ceased. It was no duty for any child of Adam, to love God: no sin not to love him. And if no sin, then no repentance, no atonement, no pardon was needed in the case. The divine law ceased to be obligatory the moment the favour of God was lost by the fall. And so no child of Adam could be considered as being under it. It had been inconsistent with the divine perfections in God to have held mankind bound by it: he was obliged in justice, if he brought us into being, to provide some relief for us. Yea, God was obliged in justice to forgive us, and become our friend, or not to require our love. For it would not be just and right to require us to love him, if there is no loveliness in his

If this is the very truth of the case, it will follow, that it was at God's sovereign election, to determine, whether to grant any relief, or not; and what relief to grant; and when, and to whom. To give his son to die with a view to save all mankind, or only a part: to send the news of the gospel to all nations, or only to some: To give every child of Adam, born in a christian land, opportunity by living, to hear the glad tidings, or only to grant this to some, while others die in infancy and never hear. Those who die in infancy, may as justly be held under law in the next world, as those that live may in this. God is under no more obligations to save those that die, than he is to save those that live: to grant the regenerating influences of his spirit to them, than he is to these. As to those who live and hear the gospel once, God is not obliged to send them the news the second time, or to wait a moment longer after the first refusal, and if mankind are disinclined to hearken to the gospel, God is at liberty to determine what pains to take with them, whether much, or little, or none: whether to use external means only, or to grant the internal influences of his spirit: whether to strive with them a longer or a shorter time, in a greater or less degree, in a common or special manner. He may have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he may harden, i. e. leave to their own hearts under such external circumstances, as he certainly knows will have this issue. And if any proud conceited rebel

his nature. And on this hypothesis, there is no loveliness in his nature, 'till he forgives us, and becomes our friend. And as soon as God forgives us, and becomes our friend, we shall naturally love him, and so we shall not need to be *born of the spirit*, for that which is *born of the flesh* may love a friend and benefactor: for *sinners love those that love them*. And so, on this scheme, the redeemer and the sanctifier are needless. And so if this scheme is true, christianity is overthrown.---It concerns Mr. Cudworth, to give a better answer to this reasoning, than yet he has done.---To say, that the divine law requires us to do, what is "contrary to the law of God," and yet is holy, just, and good." is to solve the difficulty by an express self contradiction.---To say, that God is in himself infinitely lovely, is to give up his whole scheme. But he must own this, or give up the gospel. *Further Defence.* p. 221, &c.

thinks

thinks himself hardly dealt with, and is ready in a rage to rise against God and against his law with loud complaints, God is at full liberty, as the blame is wholly on the rebel's side, to treat him accordingly, and in righteous judgment give him up to the deceits of his own heart, and to the delusions of satan, to be led captive by him at his will, into open infidelity, or into delusive hopes and joys, that *he might believe a lie*, and finally be damned. 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12.—And thus if the law is good, the whole of the divine conduct toward mankind, in fact stands justified. For in no part of his conduct is there the least appearance of illegal severity. This never was objected even by his worst enemies. And if his law is good, his whole conduct therefore stands compleatly justified.—And

If any say, that the law was not good, that God could not justly have held mankind bound by it, but was obliged to provide some relief; then it will inevitably follow, that that book, which affirms the divine law to be holy, just and good; and attributes the relief provided wholly to free grace, cannot be from God: because its fundamental maxims are false. So that of necessity we must grant the law to be good, with all its native consequences, or be infidels. And he who from the heart does not the one, is in fact, the other, in the sight of God.

If God was obliged in justice to provide all needful relief, then all the relief he has provided, which is no more than was really needed, is an act of justice. And if it is an act of justice, it is not an act of grace: and so on this hypothesis, there is in the gospel absolutely no grace at all.—Or

If God was obliged in justice to provide, at least, some relief; then the relief provided in the gospel is, at least, partly an act of justice. And if partly an act of justice, not wholly an act of grace: on either hypothesis, the gospel cannot be true, which every where claims to be wholly of free grace.

For the son of God to become incarnate, and die to get justice done us, as though his father was a tyrant, is inconsistent with every perfection of the deity. To entertain such a notion, is, at least, as great a reflection on the holy ONE of Israel, as atheism itself. To say, that God is unrighteous, is as impious as to say

say, there is no God. And a system of religious affections arising from such views, must be, in an eminent degree, *an abomination to the Lord.*

IV. If the divine law is holy, just and good, a glorious law, the law which all mankind are naturally under; then the degree of our sinful depravity, and the degree of our blame worthiness is to be determined by this rule: and any other judgment of ourselves we come into, not agreeable to this standard, is not according to truth. So near as we approach to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves, and to a conduct exactly answerable, so near we approach to the rule of our duty. But so far as we are destitute of that lively, high and ravishing sense of the divine glories, which is productive of perfect love and a perfect obedience, so far are we from what we ought to be: and so far as we are destitute of that love to our neighbour, which will effectually excite us, in thought, word and deed, to conduct toward him, as we would that he should do toward us; so far we are from the rule. And we are to blame for every defect in a degree equal to the greatness of the legal penalty; that is, for every defect we are so much to blame as to merit eternal misery. And so far as our judgment of our moral character is regulated by this rule, so far our opinion of ourselves is according to truth. This is to *think soberly of ourselves, and as we ought to think.* To think better of ourselves is pride. And the degree of our pride and groundless self-conceit, is therefore just equal to our distance from this view of ourselves, and to our distance from an answerable frame of heart toward ourselves, in the sight of God. Just so far as we are disposed to think the law too severe, just so far are we disposed to justify ourselves and condemn God; and just so far are we self-righteous, in the worse sense of the word. On the other hand, so far as the law actually appears to our hearts to be holy, just, good and glorious, so far we actually justify God, and take all the blame to ourselves, and loath and abhor ourselves in his sight. And just so far, and no farther, are we free from what the scripture means by a self-righteous spirit. Just so far as God and his law rise in their glory in our view, and to our sense and feeling, just so far

far our character sinks, and is rendered odious, abominable, ill deserving, hell-deserving, in our eyes. And just so far our need of Christ and free grace comes into view. For the most exalted virtue of the highest saint weighed in the balance of the divine law, and compared with the demerit of the least sin, is lighter than the least atom of matter, compared with the whole material system. But of this more hereafter.

THOSE who, in the inmost recess of their hearts, never as yet viewed the divine law, as in itself, holy, just, good and glorious, are to this day under the full power of a self-righteous spirit, and under the reigning dominion of a spirit of enmity against God, and against the glorious gospel of his son. And the more religious and devout they are in their own opinion, just so much worse they be; as all their religion and devotion only feeds and confirms the pride of their hearts. For the whole of their good opinion of themselves as religious men, is nothing but pride and groundless self-conceit in the sight of God; who considers them in the midst of their highest raptures, as being what they are, and as deserving what they do, compared with his holy law, that perfect rule of right. Which perfect rule of right they are so far from any degree of conformity to, that, as yet, in their inmost soul, they never once thought it to be good.—And

V. IF the divine law is holy, just, good and glorious, true repentance for sin cannot begin to take place in the hearts of sinners (nor for the same reason can they yield any sincere obedience to it) till it begin to appear to be such. Sincere obedience to a law we sincerely hate, is a glaring inconsistency. And sincere repentance when we do not feel ourselves to blame, is an express contradiction. But till the law begins to appear holy, just, good and glorious, sinners cannot begin to see that that blame lies on them, which the gospel calls them to acknowledge, and to humble themselves for, when it calls them to repentance. For as in the gospel an infinite atonement for sin is provided, the import of which is, that God's law is wholly right, and that we are wholly wrong, and as infinitely to blame, as the law supposes; so when it calls us to repentance, it cannot be understood

stood in any other sense. Nor is any other kind of repentance the thing the gospel can possibly mean. The charge exhibited against us in the law, is by the cross of Christ pronounced to be perfectly right, and the law by which we are charged and condemned, is declared to be holy, just and good, a glorious law, worthy to be magnified and made honourable: and all the blame is considered as being entirely in us, God and his throne for ever guiltless. Repentance begins in our beginning to view things in this light, with an answerable frame of heart. But to object against the charge as being too severe, and against the law as requiring too much, is a full proof of an impenitent heart. For the import of such an objection is, "the fault alledged is not in me, "in manner and form as set forth in the charge. He "that thus charges me therefore has done me an injury; 'tis therefore proper for him to repent, and not "for me." And if any sinner, in such a state of mind, should by any delusion, be induced to believe, that God withdraws the charge, and delivers him from the curse, he might in this belief forgive his maker, and to his own apprehension be fully reconciled to him. Which reconciliation, if it be called by the name of evangelical repentance, yet is so far from being the thing, that it is a full proof that such a sinner, in the eye of the gospel, is not yet convinced, that it belongs to him to repent. For as yet, he does not see himself to blame, in manner and form, as alledged in the divine law. Every objection a man's heart makes against the law, every plea he advances for himself, every excuse, every extenuating consideration, is a proof he does not think himself to blame as therein held forth. And the more positively he affirms, that it is impossible he should love God, until first he knows that his sins are pardoned, the more positively does he declare that his uncircumcised heart is still unhumbled, and that he is still disposed to justify himself, and impute iniquity to his maker. For God to forgive a sinner in this view, and so bring him to a reconciliation, is virtually to own that his law was too severe, and himself to blame, and to repent and make restitution, and so induce the sinner to forgive him. And to suppose that Christ died to bring God the
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father to this, is the very first born of blasphemy. And if sinners believe such a gospel, and are ravished with it, their very faith proves them infidels, and their very joys prove they are enemies to the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. There can be not the least degree of that kind of repentance, which the gospel calls sinners unto, unless we feel our selves to blame in the sense, which the death of Christ imports. But the plain import of the death of Christ is, that the law by which we are charged and condemned, is a good and glorious law. For its being such, was the very thing that rendered his mediation and death needful in order to our being forgiven, consistent with the divine honour. To be blind to the beauty of the law, to plead in our own justification, to excuse, extenuate, &c. is to declare our selves to be, in the sight of God, impenitent infidels, enemies to Heaven. For every word we say in our justification, in this case, is to God's condemnation. For if we are not so much to blame as his law supposes, he is to blame who made the law: and repentance, restitution and reformation, are his duty. And so a self-justifying, is a God-condemning disposition; and therefore of all things most diametrically opposite to the cross of Christ, which declares God to be wholly right, and seals the declaration with blood.

VI. IF the divine law is holy, just and good, antecedent to a consideration of the death of Christ, then the gift of Christ, to be a saviour, was an act of grace absolutely free. As God was not obliged to grant any relief at all; so the relief he has granted, in every view of it, is an act of grace absolutely free. The gift of Christ to be a redeemer, the gift of the holy spirit to be a sanctifier, divine illumination, faith, repentance, forgiveness, and every other blessing contained in the gospel, is absolutely of free grace.

AND by the way, this is the true gospel notion of free grace; and is what no antinomian ever yet had a true idea of. For till the law appears to be a glorious law, worthy to be magnified and made honourable, the grace of the gospel cannot be seen. For it was this very thing that rendered the gift of Christ, in God, an act of grace, altogether free. For had not the law been
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wholly good, God had been obliged in justice to grant us some relief. And had it not been altogether glorious, the death of Christ to do it honour had been needless.

AND, this, I say, is an idea of free grace, that no antinomian ever had. I use the word antinomian according to its proper signification, to mean, one that is against the law; which is the true character of all men, how much enlightened soever they have been, in reality or to appearance, who are yet blind to the beauty of the divine law. For all such are enemies to it in heart, whatever their profession may be. Arminians and Pelagians are professed enemies to the law, and so were those in the two last centuries, who were commonly called antinomians. But those who profess to be enemies to the divine law, and boldly advance their objections against it, do only more impudently proclaim, what more secretly lurks in the heart of every unregenerate man, how orthodox soever his profession may be. For every carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. And therefore it is equally true, as to all unregenerate men, as the apostle affirms, *the natural man cannot discern the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him*. Neither the glory nor the grace of the gospel was ever seen by an unregenerate man. For the gospel has no glory nor grace in it, only on supposition the law was a glorious law antecedent to a consideration of the gift of Christ. 'Till therefore the law be thus viewed, and no unregenerate man ever viewed it thus, neither the glory nor the grace of the gospel can ever be seen. And "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

BUT I the rather say, this is an idea of the grace of the gospel no antinomian ever had. To set it in contrast with that notion of free grace, which antinomians so called, are wont to have, and to glory in, viz. Being pardoned before repentance: this is free grace indeed. "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out," sounds very legal in an antinomian ear. To believe the pardon of sin and God's love to me, impenitent as I am, is pure gospel. And this belief is the source of love to God, and of all religion. And these, with them, are the doctrines of free grace, which they love,
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and for which they are full of zeal. But as to the free grace of the gospel of Christ, (which supposes, that God was absolutely unobliged to grant any relief to this apostate world, as the law by which we stood condemned, was holy, just, good, and glorious,)—explain it, 'till they begin a little to understand what you mean, and they will appear as great enemies to free grace, as any people in the world: just as the Pharisees of old, who made their boast of the law, and yet were enemies to the law, rightly understood. Their false notions of the law served only to feed their spiritual pride, just as false notions of Christ and free grace do with these men.

SECTION IV.

The Design of the Mediatorial Office and Work of Christ, was to do Honour to the Divine Law.

A MEDIATOR, to bring about a reconciliation, supposes the parties concerned to be at variance. If both parties are to blame, it is the business of a mediator to bring both parties to see their faults, to confess, reform, and make restitution, and so to make up. If one party is altogether right, and the other altogether wrong, then one party is to be wholly justified, approved and commended, as publicly as the controversy is known, and the entire blame to be laid at the other's door; who, if he can make no restitution, must suffer according to his desert, unless the mediator, or some other, will interest himself in his welfare, so as to become his sponsor, and answer in his stead. And if his crime is of such a nature, that his penitency can make no atonement, if ever he is forgiven and received into favour, it must be simply on the credit of his sponsor.—But, in the case before us, God was wholly right, and we were wholly wrong; and so much to blame, that our deepest penitency ought in reason and justice to be disregarded. However, so far were we from penitency, as rather to be disposed to justify ourselves, and lay the blame on God, and on his holy law. And our disaffection to the divine character and government arose even to enmity it self.—When therefore the mediator espoused his father's honour, and testified of the world, that their works were evil, they were angry, yea they were enraged, and they put him to death as not fit to live. So far were they from a disposition to take the blame to themselves, confess, repent, return and be reconciled.—And this conduct of a set of men, who made very high claims to virtue, was but a specimen of that temper which is natural to all mankind.—But what reason have mankind to be so disaffected to the deity?

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GOD, an absolutely perfect, and infinitely glorious and amiable being, infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and of universal obedience, the creator and original proprietor of the universe, as becomes him, assumes the authority of king and supreme governor over his own world, takes the throne, proclaims his divinity, saying, *I am the Lord, and besides me there is no other God, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and yield an entire obedience to his will. Adding, he that doth these things shall live in them; but the soul that sins shall die.*

FOR us thus to love, honour and obey him, is no more than a practical acknowledgement of his godhead and lordship; it is no more than barely giving unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. And this is all he requires, and it is our duty; and our obligations to it are infinite, and it is infinitely for our interest. So that our disaffection and rebellion are unreasonable, groundless, nay infinitely criminal. To be disaffected and to rise in open rebellion, as we in this lower world have done, is a practical declaration in the sight of the universe, (and practice speaks louder than words) that God's character is not good, and that his law is bad. Or in other words, it is a practical declaration, that he is not what he claims to be, by nature God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, and our rightful sovereign.

To have given up his law, founded on his god-head and lordship, and which only asserted his proper character and worth, and claimed his proper rights, had been a practical giving up of his divinity and supremacy, in favour of a disaffection absolutely groundless, of a rebellion infinitely unreasonable. A thing very unbecoming the absolutely perfect being, at the head of the universe. Better, infinitely better a whole race of such apostates be doomed to endless woes, as a publick practical declaration of the infinite evil of their crimes.

THE design of the incarnation, life and death of the son of God, was to give a practical declaration, in the most publick manner, even in the sight of the whole intellectual system, that God was worthy of all that love, honour and obedience which his law required, and that

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sin was as great an evil as the punishment threatened supposed; and so to declare God's righteousness, and condemn the sins of an apostate world, to the end "God might be just, and yet a justifier of the believer." And this he did by obeying and dying in our room and stead.

THE Jewish dispensation, which was designed to prepare the way for, and to introduce the christian, and which was a shadow of which Christ is the substance, was in its whole constitution purposely calculated to do honour to the divine law. The clouds and the thick darkness and the flame of a devouring fire on Mount Sinai, the thunders and the lightnings, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, were in honour of the divine law; which was by God promulged to an assembly of men, women and children, containing near three millions. An affair so grand as this had never before happened in this lower world.—And all the variety of temporal curses enumerated and denounced against the transgressor, and all the variety of temporal blessings reckoned up and promised to the obedient, were in honour of the divine law. And the law being written with the finger of God on two tables of stone, laid up in the ark, and placed in the holy of holies, under the mercy seat, the dwelling place of the God of Israel, was in honour of the divine law. And so were all the sacrifices of atonement, the altars, the priests, especially the high-priest, dressed in his holy robes, holiness to the Lord, written on his forehead, the names of the twelve tribes on his breast and on his shoulder, the blood of atonement in his hand, entering once every year into the holy of holies into the immediate presence of God, to make atonement. Nor could any transgressor of the law, under that dispensation, obtain remission of sins without shedding of blood. A plain acknowledgement, that his blood deserved to be shed, who transgressed the law. And so a practical declaration that the law was holy, just and good.

AND answerable to the spirit of that dispensation, the whole congregation of Israel were by the divine direction led, on their entering into the holy land, to Mount Gerizzim and to Mount Ebal; and while the curse of the law against the transgressor was proclaimed aloud, all
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the congregation answered, amen, as a most public and solemn declaration, that the law was holy, just and good. Nor could a Jew without this acknowledgement, with any consistency, present a bull or a goat, to die in his stead, and make atonement for his sins.

BUT all the honours done to the divine law under that dispensation were but shadows, but mere shadows. They had no substance in them. They were acknowledgements too mean to be of any avail. They were of no weight at all to counterbalance the reproach cast on the divine Majesty by sin. And therefore *the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. Yea, Lebanon was not sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering.*

WHEREFORE the son of God, antecedent to his incarnation, is introduced, saying to his father, "sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. They had no dignity, no worth, no virtue, and could not answer the end. Mine ears hast thou bored, as the Jewish master did his servant's, who of his own free will, said, I love my master and will be his servant for ever. O eternal father, I have offered to become thy servant in this great work, and thou hast accepted the offer, and bored mine ears.—*Then said I, lo I come, I delight to do thy will; yea, thy law is within my heart.*" Compare Exod xxi. 5, 6. Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8. Heb. x. 5, 6, 7.

HIM, therefore, "did God set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness". And because he thus voluntarily espoused the honour of his father's government, and "condemned sin in the flesh" on the cross, because he thus "loved righteousness and hated iniquity," therefore was his father well pleased, "smelt a sweet savour," exalted his son, and became propitious to an apostate, sinful, guilty world through him.—For he, being God as well as man, was worthy, was of sufficient dignity, and his obedience and sufferings of sufficient weight in his father's sight.

THE import of that perfect obedience to his father's will, in our stead, through the greatest trials, which the son of God incarnate performed, was that "God was worthy of supreme love and honour, and of universal obe-

"obedience from his creature man."—*the import of his sufferings* in our room, in which he was made a curse to redeem us from the curse of the law, was, that "the curse of the law was strictly just, and such as became his father to threaten and to execute." *the import of his appearing in the presence of God in Heaven, with his own blood,* to make intercession for transgressors, is, that "he does not, nay cannot desire any favour to be shewn to sinners under a notion the law is too severe: but only as being considered holy, just, good and glorious, worthy to be magnified and made honourable by the blood of the son of God."—And the justice of the divine law will appear in a striking light, when he who thus honoured it in his own person on the cross, and thus honours it at his father's right hand in Heaven, appears to put it in execution *at the last day on his near relatives, his brethren according to the flesh* who would never own the goodness of the law, nor take the blame of their disaffection and rebellion to themselves, and on this footing despised and rejected the glorious grace of the gospel.—And all holy beings will echo to the last sentence, and with the highest approbation join to cry, *amen, HALLELUJAH: while the smoke of their torment ascends for ever and ever.*

THUS the whole mediatorial scheme is designed, and in its own nature adapted, to do honour to the divine law.

AND to do honour to the divine law was *the only thing* that rendered the mediatorial office and work of Christ needful in order to the salvation of sinners. For God was not an unrighteous being, and so could not be disposed to hold his creatures bound by a bad law, unless his son would die to procure their relief. Nor was the goodness of the divine nature so small, that he could not find in his heart to shew mercy to sinners, unless his son, to move his compassion, would die for them on earth, and plead their cause in Heaven. Had the law in fact been bad, it had been the most honourable thing in the divine Majesty to have laid it aside expressly as such, and no mediator had been needful in the case; and had there been no bar in the way of the honourable exercise of divine grace to a guilty world, infinite goodness, by a sovereign act, might at an
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infinitely less expence, have pardoned and saved all the human race, and all the labours and sufferings of his son to make atonement had been needless. God did not want a heart to do us justice. Nay, God had an heart overflowing with infinite goodness, witness the gift of his son. And so no mediator was needful to move the divine compassions, much less to prevent his being too severe with us. Yea, a mediator for any such purposes had been an infinite reproach to the deity. A mediator therefore was needful, in order to the salvation of sinners, for no other purpose, but to do honour to the divine law, which we had dishonoured by our sins. And thus he asserted the divine character, vindicated the rights of the godhead, declared the righteousness of the divine government, condemned sin, laid all the blame of our disaffection and rebellion at our own door, while he obeyed and died in our room and stead, that we thro' him might be saved.—But,

I. IF Christ died to do honour to the divine law, then there is no glory in the gospel only on supposition the law is a glorious law. For not one of the divine perfections are manifested in the death of an incarnate God to do honour to the divine law, if the divine law was not worthy of this honour. It was no act of wisdom in God to give his son to die to do honour to that, which deserved no such honour. It was no act of holiness, justice, or goodness. It was neither to the honour of God, nor needful to the salvation of men.—And,

IF not one of the divine perfections are manifested in the death of Christ, only on supposition the law is a glorious law, not one of the divine perfections can be seen in this affair only in a view of the glory of the law. No glory can be seen in the atonement, only as the law appears to be a glorious law. To every one at enmity against the divine law, the glory of the gospel will be hid.*—And

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* If God's law requires, on the penalty of eternal destruction, that, which is in its own nature sinful, then it is a wicked law. But that which is "contrary to the law of God," is in its own nature sinful: for *sin is a transgression of the*

II. IF the excellency of the divine law, as a perfect rule of right, holy, just, and good, was the only thing that rendered the death of Christ needful in order to the salvation of sinners; then a view of the excellency of the divine law, as a perfect rule of right, holy, just, and good, and an answerable view of our own character and state, is the only thing that can lead us to see our need of the atonement of Christ. We cannot see our need of Christ's atonement, unless we see that which renders his atonement needful; but the excellency of the divine law was that which rendered the atonement of Christ needful: therefore we cannot see our need of the atonement of Christ, unless we see the excellency of the divine law.—A sinner frightened with the apprehensions of eternal burnings, may see his need of deliverance, without any idea of the need of an infinite atonement in order thereto.—And,

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the law. But according to Mr. *Cudworth*, the law requires what is "contrary to the law of God," what "clashes with our duty." p. 222, 223, 224. Therefore, according to him, it is a wicked law.—But if it is a *wicked law*, God is obliged in justice to repeal it. But to give his son to die, to do honour to a wicked law, of all things in the universe, would be most contrary to all the divine perfections. In this view of the law therefore, not one of the divine perfections can be seen on the cross of Christ.—What then does Mr. *Cudworth* mean by "loving God for his own loveliness, as" thus discovered by the gospel, every divine perfection being "discovered as harmonizing in the salvation of the guilty by" "Jesus Christ?" p. 225. When on his scheme there is not one divine perfection manifested, nor any loveliness of the divine nature discovered. Yea, if the law had been what Mr. *Cudworth* says it is, it had been in its own nature an infinitely wicked thing for the son of God to die to do it honour. It had been to do honour to a wicked law; which is the same thing as to do honour to wickedness; which is an infinitely wicked thing.—What then does Mr. *Cudworth* mean, by "loving God for his own loveliness?" Why, he believes, that by means of Christ's death, his sins are pardoned, and God become his particular friend, turned to be entirely on his side, "disposed to make him happy, and oppose whatever is contrary to his happiness." p. 221, 223. and this appears
lovely

To say, "that the divine law is holy, just, and good, "in our view, but not glorious;" is to say, "that holiness, justice, and goodness, in our view, are not glorious attributes." And if so, then neither does God deserve our love, nor is his law worthy to be honoured on the cross of Christ, in our view.

So long as we are at enmity against the law, so long as the divine law appears to be an inglorious, unlovely, undesirable law; not perfect in beauty, without a blemish, with application to ourselves: even so long our need of Christ to die in our stead, to do honour to the law, will be undiscerned.—

Therefore,

To the *natural man*, in the apostolic age, when the gospel, as is acknowledged, was rightly stated, the work of redemption by Christ, appeared to be a *foolish, shocking* affair (compare 1 Cor. i. 18, 23, 24. Chap. ii. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 3.) *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.* For while they were, as the same apostle observes, *at enmity against*

lovely to him; and is all the idea of the loveliness of the divine nature he can conceive of." p. 221. For he loves himself, although he appears perfectly stupid to the honour of the divine character, in imputing such wickedness to the deity, as requiring what is "contrary to the law of God, and clashes with our duty." And he can be ravished to think his own happiness secure, although so blind to the beauty of the divine character, as to feel disposed, to declare before the world, that it is "utterly impossible" to love it.—And pray now, how does Mr. *Cudworth* do to keep from plunging headlong into downright infidelity? How can he believe that the son of God became incarnate and died to do honour to a law so unreasonable and wicked, as to require what "is inconsistent with the original constitution of a reasonable creature, and contrary to the law of God? Why, indeed, he feels, or rather pretends to feel no difficulty in the way. For he can, in express contradiction to himself, without a blush, pronounce this very law "holy, just, and good?"—"This does not infer that the law was too rigorous," says he, "no, far from it, this is only Mr. *Bellamy's* forced conclusion." p. 226. But not a word does he say, to shew wherein my *conclusion* was forced: or to free his own scheme from this glaring inconsistency.

God and his law, (*Rom. viii. 7.*) To hear, that the son of God incarnate, died on the cross, to declare God's righteousness, to condemn sin, to magnify the law and make it honourable, must needs stumble and confound the carnal Jews, and appear foolishness to the pagan Greeks. No miracles therefore were sufficient to convince them of the divine original of the gospel, nothing short of the immediate influences of the spirit of God to open their eyes and take the veil from their hearts. But unto them who were thus CALLED, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. And if our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish. For indeed it had been a foolish thing for God to have given his son to die to save sinners, had there been no need of it: and there had been no need of it, had not the divine law, which man had broken, and by which he stood condemned, been holy, just, and good, a glorious law, worthy to be honoured by the blood of an incarnate God. But to natural men, the divine law does not appear to be thus glorious and thus worthy of honour; rather it appears an odious, hateful law, which ought to be repealed. For the carnal mind is at enmity against God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.*

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* If God, antecedent to a consideration of the gift of his son, viewed in the glass of the law, was an ugly, hateful being: then he deserved to be hated and abhorred: and then the law which required us to love him on pain of death, was an unreasonable, tyrannical law: and then it deserved to be hated and treated with contempt, and not to be loved and honoured: and then the death of Christ to do it honour, was not the wisdom of God, but a stumbling block and foolishness: and the gospel is not divine, is not from God: nothing remains but infidelity.

To say, that the law is holy, just, and good, in requiring us to love a hateful character on pain of death, is worse than infidelity. To believe God a hateful being, and a tyrant in our hearts, and yet with our mouths to say, it is, in him, holy, just,

III. AN *Antinomian* spirit is an *Antichristian* spirit ; to hate the divine law is to be an enemy to the cross of Christ ; to hate the divine law is to be an enemy to the son of God incarnate, who loved the law, and died to do it honour : An enemy to his character, and to the very design of his death.—And,

AN *Antinomian* spirit is the very source of infidelity. For if the divine law is an odious, hateful law, it is incredible, it is absolutely incredible, that the son of God should come from Heaven, and die to do it honour.—Therefore every *Antinomian* is at heart an infidel.—But every unregenerate man is in this sense an *Antino-*

just, and good, to require us to love him on pain of death, is to *speak lies in hypocrisy*.—My *Theron* believed the law holy, just, and good, in requiring supreme love on pain of death, when he said, “ Let all heaven for ever love and adore the infinitely glorious majesty, although I receive my just desert, and perish for ever.” He saw God’s character exhibited in his law to be lovely. This led him to see why Christ so loved and so honoured this character on the cross. And Christ crucified, in this view, appeared to him *the wisdom of God*. Should one tell *Theron*, that Christ never did love this character of God ; never did think “ that all heaven ought for ever “ to love and adore the infinitely glorious majesty, viewed as “ thus disposed to punish sin with so great severity ;” And should he affirm, that this is a “ species of love beyond what Jesus Christ ever had :” and that it was not from love to this character originally, and to do it honour, that Christ was willing to *endure the cross and despise the shame* ; but merely because he was bribed, because his father hired him by *the joy set before him* : and should one endeavour to prove all this from scripture : *Theron* shocked with the blasphemy, would be ready at once to pronounce the man worse than an infidel.—And yet, if this is not the point of light in which Mr. *Cudworth* views things, I know not what he means, by what he says, p. 224. for, in any other view, there is no force in what he says. For if Christ verily thought in his heart, and that previous to a consideration of *the joy set before him*, that “ all heaven ought for ever to love and adore the infinitely glorious majesty, for being so severe against sin ;” then *Theron*, through the regenerating influences of the holy spirit, was only brought to view things in a Christian light : That is, in the same light that Christ did.

mian. (Rom. viii. 7.) Therefore every unregenerate man is under the reigning power of infidelity. And therefore it is written, 1 Joh. v. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. And Rom. x. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

IV. If God the father gave his son to die, if God the son voluntarily left his father's bosom, and expired upon the cross, to do honour to the divine law; then on the cross of Christ, we have the highest possible external proof of the goodness of the divine law: The highest proof which could have been given by God the father, or God the son; and so the highest external proof, that God our creator is infinitely worthy of our supreme love and universal obedience, and that our disaffection to him and to his government is intirely groundless, yea infinitely criminal, exactly agreeable to the import of the divine law.—Therefore,

To doubt of the infinite amiableness of God our creator, to doubt of the absolute perfection of his law and government, or to doubt whether our disaffection be thus groundless and thus criminal, is to doubt the truth of the gospel.—Every objection against the divine character, every objection against the divine law, every sin-extenuating, self-justifying plea, is the language of infidelity. For if our objections against God and his law are of the least weight, or if our pleas do in the least render us excusable, then Jesus was not the son of God. For if Jesus was the son of God, God and his law are wholly right, and we are wholly wrong, and as much to blame and as inexcusable, as the curse of the law supposes; for this was the ground on which he died. And if in his death he sealed a falshood with his blood, surely he did not come from God.—

Therefore,

To believe with all the heart, that Jesus is the Christ, is—to believe with all the heart, that God our creator is infinitely amiable, infinitely worthy of supreme love and universal obedience from his creature man:—And to believe with all the heart, that the divine law, which requires this of us, in our present state, on pain
of

of eternal damnation, is a holy, just, and good, and glorious law, worthy to be magnified and made honourable by the obedience and death of an incarnate God. To believe with all the heart that our disaffection to the divine character, law, and government, is not only entirely groundless, but infinitely criminal. And to believe with all the heart, that the son of God, in this view, became incarnate, lived and died, that he might declare God and his law to be wholly right, and the whole blame to be in us; or in other words, that he might declare God's righteousness, and condemn sin in the flesh: that this was the import of his being made a curse to redeem us from the curse, and that this was the design of his being set forth to be a propitiation; and that it is only in his name, and through him, who has thus done, that God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.—But,

To believe these truths with all the heart, to come cordially into these sentiments, is perfectly contrary to every vicious bias in the heart of a sin-loving, sin-extenuating, self-justifying, God-hating, law-condemning creature; which is the character of every unregenerate man.

Therefore,

Every unregenerate man is not only at heart an infidel, but even as great an enemy to the truth of the gospel, as he is to the holiness, justice, and goodness of the law.—Therefore,

No man can say that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3. No man can come to the son, but whom the father draws, Joh. vi. 44. And whosoever believeth Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, 1 Joh. v. 1.—

And yet,

V. From this view of the mediatorial office and work of Jesus Christ, his true character and divine mission may be infallibly determined. Had he been an enemy to the divine law, which the God of Israel had so honoured on Mount Sinai, and in the whole Jewish dispensation, it had been a full proof, that he was not the Messiah promised in the Jewish sacred writings. A full proof, rather, that he was an enemy to the God of Israel, and on the side of his rebellious subjects, who all agree, to hate his law.—But now it appears, that,

He loved his father with all his heart ; was perfectly in his interest, wholly on his side, and on the side of his law and government. He judged his father to be wholly right, and we to be wholly wrong ; his father's law to be holy, just, and good, and we altogether to blame ; even as much to blame, as the law supposed ; and was as great an enemy to the wickedness of an apostate world, as the father himself. While his regard to the welfare of lost sinners was so great, that he was *willing to die for their redemption* ; he looked upon them so much to blame, and so deserving of the threatened punishment, that he had *not the least desire they should be pardoned, unless, in a way, in which, it should be most explicitly acknowledged, that it had been a worthy becoming deed in God to have punished them according to law.* And thus he was to perfection his father's friend, and to perfection an enemy to the spirit of his father's rebellious subjects. Thus *he loved righteousness and hated iniquity.* And in this frame of heart, he perfectly obeyed his father's law, and offered up himself a sacrifice to God, for the sins of the world.—Which is

A FULL demonstration that he was sent of God. For he is his father's very image. We may often from the countenance of a child guess who his father is ; but here the son is *the express image of his father's person.* So that no man, who knows God the father, can doubt whether Jesus is his son. For the very *glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ.*—Justly therefore did our blessed Saviour condemn the infidel Jews, as hating his father, because they hated him ; for he and his father were so exactly alike, that to hate him was a full proof they hated the father also. *Job. xv. 23.* and justly did he dispute their claim to have God for their father, and argue that they rather had the devil to their father, from the malignant spirit they shewed towards him, who was the very image of the deity. *Job. viii. 42. If God were your father, ye would love me. ver. 44. Ye are of your father the devil.* And justly did he attribute all their opposition to him and to his cause, to their ignorance of, and hatred to, the true God, and affirm that no man could be an infidel, but from a wicked, ungodly heart. *Job. iii. 19, 20, 21. Chap. vii. 17. Chap. viii. 33, 48. Chap. xv. 21. 25.*

To

To say, that Jesus Christ, who loved the divine law, and lived and died to do it honour, came from the devil, who hates the divine law, and hath set up his kingdom in opposition to it, and is at the head of the grand rebellion in the intellectual system, is just the same kind of absurdity Christ's enemies were driven to of old, when to evade the evidence exhibited in his miracles, they said, *he casteth out devils by Beelzebub*. For both equally suppose, that *Satan is divided against himself*; and is pulling down his own kingdom with his own hands. *Matth. xii. 24. 26.*

To be blind to the glory of Christ crucified, is of the same nature, and altogether as criminal, as to be blind to the glory of God the father. And to be an unbeliever in the son, as great a vice as to be an enemy to the father; to reject revealed religion, an argument of as bad a heart, as downright Atheism. The sentence therefore is just, *he that believeth not shall be damned*. For the gospel carries its own evidence along with it, as clearly as the visible creation. Nay, all the divine perfections are more clearly to be seen in the cross of Christ, to one not criminally blind, than the invisible things of God be, in the things which are made. For, *the glory of God is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ*. So that, with the Jews of old, all who live under the light of the gospel in any age. *have no cloke for their sin*, if they continue unbelievers.

VI. If the design of Christ's mediatorial office and work was to do honour to the divine law, we may hence learn the nature of Christ's merits, or why his obedience was so meritorious in his father's eyes, and why the sacrifice of himself was so acceptable, of so sweet smelling a favour, and his whole character, office, and work, so infinitely well pleasing to the deity; that, to testify his approbation in the sight of the whole universe, he raised him from the dead, took him up into heaven, gave him a place on his own throne, at his own right hand, issued out public orders through the world above, *worship him all ye Gods*, and resigned up all the angelic hosts to his command, as ministring spirits to do his will, and set him at the head of the whole universe, with all power and authority in heaven and earth, to reign till all his

enemies are put under his feet, and his whole scheme carried into execution, putting all things under him, not only all created things, but even God the Holy Ghost, to be sent in his name to convince the world of sin, and effectually to call home the elect to God through him, *for all things were put under him, him only excepted, who did put all things under him*; and farther to testify his approbation and infinite delight, in the obedience and sacrifice of his son, peace and good will are proclaimed to this revolted world, God becomes propitious, ready to be reconciled to any, how vile soever, who repent and return in the all-prevailing NAME of Jesus Christ, his beloved son, in whom he is well pleased: so now repentance and remission of sin in his name may be preached to all nations, and whosoever will may come, may return to God thro' him, the fullest assurances of acceptance in his name being given:—I say, if the design of Christ's mediatorial office and work, of his life and death, was to do honour to the divine law, we may see the reason why his merit is so great in his father's eyes, and why he is thus accepted and thus rewarded by him; it was because in all he DECLARED HIS FATHER'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. He rendered to God the glory which was due unto his name. He glorified his father on earth, and therefore his father glorifies him in heaven.*

OUR

* There are thousands that talk of trusting in the righteousness of Christ, who hate his righteousness with all their hearts. They pretend to build all their hopes on his merit, when that, in him, which was so meritorious in his father's eyes, is the very abhorrence of their souls. Every carnal unregenerate heart is at enmity against the divine law. *Rom. viii. 7.* But to hate the divine law, is to hate that, in a conformity to which, the righteousness of Christ consisted, and his merit lay. He who is disaffected to this law, is therefore equally disaffected to the true and real character of Christ. He hates that righteousness of Christ, which was so meritorious in his father's eyes. And can a man consistently and really trust in the merit of that, which in his eyes has no merit in it, but is rather altogether odious? Is not he, who denies the infinite amiableness of the deity, as he is in himself, and yet pretends to trust in the righteousness of Christ, which consisted in treating God as an infinitely amiable being, guilty of the most ignorant and stupid self

Our revolt from God, in this lower world, had been an open, public, practical decaration, in the sight of the whole intellectual system, "that the infinitely glorious majesty of heaven and earth, was not worthy to be loved and obeyed by his creature man, as his law required: nor should we deserve, nor need we fear, that we should be punished according to his law, if we did rebel."

LOVE to the deity, in the governor of the world, awakened infinite resentment. And to bear testimony against this infinitely impious and wicked insult, all the human race were doomed to eternal death. Thus was the wrath of God revealed from heaven.

THE interposition of the son of God in our nature, to obey and die in the room of rebellious, guilty man, was a practical acknowledgment made, in the most public manner, in the sight of Heaven and earth, and in a manner the most honorary to the deity, "that God was as worthy to be loved and obeyed, as the law supposed; and our disaffection and rebellion, as great an evil: and that therefore the law, in all its strictness, and with all its curses, is holy, just and good."—Thus God's dignity was asserted, his authority owned, the righteousness of his government declared, his moral character vindicated, and sin condemned, and in the whole the glory given unto God which was due unto his name.—This pleased the holy governor of the universe. He smelt a sweet savour in this sacrifice, exalted his son, and became propitious to a guilty race through him.—

self contradiction?—What then is it, that men do trust in, to whom the gospel is entirely hid? What is the Christ they love? And what do they mean by his righteousness and merit? why, one man believes that the law is abated; and this gives him comfort: Another believes there is forgiveness with God for impenitent sinners; and this gives him hope: And another believes his sins in particular are forgiven; and this gives him joy more abundantly.—And each one calls his belief *faith in Christ*, when it is the belief of a lie. And each one thinks he loves Christ, and trusts in his righteousness, because he loves and trust in his own lie. For a lie is at the bottom of the confidence of every carnal man; and a lie, which the divine law, were it set home, would detect. *Rom. vii. 7, 8.*

For now he *might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* Rom. iii. 25, 26.

HE might be just.—Just to the rights of the godhead, to the honour of his law and government and sacred authority, these being all effectually secured. Nay, to become propitious to a guilty world, as a reward of Christ's merit, was an honour, an infinite honour to his son, who had honoured him; and so was to the glory of God the father: For if the son is honoured for honouring the father, it is all *to the glory of God the father*, Phil. i. 6. 11. to bestow eternal life, on the foot of law, in testimony of his approbation, when his creatures, by supreme love and honour, and universal obedience to him, practically acknowledge him to be the **GOD and LORD**, is altogether to the glory of God the father. Even so it was in this case also. And thus God might be just, even as just to his own honour in every point of view, in justifying him that believeth in Jesus, as he would have been, in the bestowment of eternal life, as a reward to perfect obedience, had man remained loyal to his sovereign. For not only was the *curse* removed, but even the *blessing* itself was merited. And while bestowed, as a reward to him, whose merit lay in glorifying his father on earth, the very bestowment of the blessing was to the glory of God the father. And thus God might be just, and the justifier of him, which believeth in Jesus.

WHICH believeth in Jesus.—Who in a view of the glory of the divine nature, and the excellency of the divine law, and conscious to the inexcusableness and infinite criminalness of his disaffection and rebellion, believes that the son of God hath become incarnate, lived and died, for the ends already mentioned, and in this belief is encouraged and emboldened in his NAME to return and come to God—to come to God *through him*.—For, to come to God by Christ, Heb. vii. 25. in the name of Christ. Joh. xvi. 23. *believing on his name.* Joh. i. 12. and to have *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* Heb. x. 9. are all expressions of the same import.

HEAVENLY things cannot be fully represented by things earthly, however our conceptions of the nature
of

of Christ's mediation, may be a little assisted by such a *similitude* as this.—Suppose,

A father of an unblemished character, admirably skilled in the art of government, at the head of a numerous family of children, wise and upright, and kind in all his conduct towards them ; in a word, suppose his character without a blemish, and his government without a fault. In this case, there can arise no disaffection to his person or government among his children, unless the fault be wholly on their side. For it is supposed there is no fault on his. His eldest son grows proud and haughty, loves bad company, and turns debauchee. Mean while, he naturally becomes disaffected to his father's character and government, and disrelishes all his ways. At length he rises in open rebellion, leaves his father's house, and seeks another home, and blackens his father's name wherever he goes. He is blamed by the neighbours, and he justifies himself ; but all he says in his own vindication is to his father's condemnation : for he can say not one word to justify his own conduct, but which at least implicitly declares the fault to be in his father. For if his father is wholly right, he is wholly wrong. A self-justifying spirit therefore in him is most provoking to his father. But as his disaffection is great, he entertains a very ill idea of his father's character, and is heartily at enmity against his government, and 'tis as natural to justify himself and declaim against his father's conduct, as it is to breathe. And let any man appear a hearty friend to his father, vindicate his character, and justify all his conduct, he feels himself reproached, and in a rage is ready to rise and revenge himself ; and protests he never will be reconciled to his father, and live at home, unless he will alter his whole plan of government, and bring down the orders of his family to his taste. But as the father is conscious there is no fault on his side ; so it appears to him inconsistent with his own honour, and with the general good of his family, to alter in one single point. For, says he, " my rebellious son is altogether to blame ; and there is need of alteration in none but him." Thus stands the controversy. Should he in a delirium believe his father's character entirely altered, and that he was become altogether

gether love to him, rebellious as he is, the delusion might give him joy, and confirm his vicious temper, both at once. Should one undertake to be a mediator, under a notion the father was partly to blame, a little too rigid, it might please the son, but it would be an affront to the father; and such a mediator would lose all his influence in a moment. He would be looked upon as taking the wrong side, and countenancing wickedness; a minister of sin, one that hated righteousness and loved iniquity. No mediator could find acceptance, but one who should most explicitly declare the father to be wholly right, and the rebellious son to be wholly wrong. Nor could his mediation be of any influence to procure a pardon, any further than it tended to assert the father's injured character, and vindicate his abused government, and establish his affronted authority, and humble and reclaim his haughty ruined child. Nor could any repentance be ever looked upon sincere, or any reconciliation be esteemed genuine, in the rebellious son, but what should have its foundation in a thorough conviction that his father's character and government were wholly right; and his own temper and conduct, from first to last, entirely wrong. An entire alteration in the state of his mind would therefore be absolutely necessary, to the end his father's character and government might appear in their native beauty. And as soon as ever he begins to see the beauty of his father's character and government, he will begin with all his heart, to take all the blame to himself; and be ready, with the prodigal son to say, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* And now he will be glad to return, if he may.—

But,

A crime may be too great to be forgiven, merely upon repentance, let the criminal be ever so penitent. Thus a wilful murderer must be put to death, let him be ever so sorry for his crime.—And thus, a prince, lately married to a poor maid, who, notwithstanding all her obligations to fidelity, soon after marriage, to his great reproach, prostitutes herself to the meanest wretch in the kingdom, is obliged in honour to himself and to his kingdom to put her away, let her penitency be ever so

so great. Pardon cannot be granted in such cases merely upon repentance. Something farther is plainly needful.—But these instances fall infinitely below the case they are designed to represent. For in the sight of God, a sinner, ever so penitent for his crimes, deserves *so much* to be cast off for ever, that infinite wisdom, goodness and rectitude, judged, *he could not honourably* be pardoned and received to favour, *unless* the Son of God himself would become incarnate, and stand, and obey, and die in his stead. Penitency is so far from being a sufficient atonement for our sins, that merely the defects attending the deepest repentance of the most humble, broken-hearted saint on earth, according to law, that perfect rule of right, merits eternal damnation. There is no hope therefore in the case of a penitent sinner, absolutely no hope at all, but what arises from the atonement, merits, and mediation of Christ, and the free grace of God through him, as revealed in the gospel.

This view of the mediation of Christ, may help us to understand the following scripture phrases. Joh. iii. 17. *God sent his son, that the world through Him might be saved.* 1 John iv. 9. *That we might have life through him.* John xx. 31. *have life through his Name.* Rom. vi. 23. *The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.* Acts x. 43. *through his Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.* 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus.* Rom. v. 1. *have peace with God through him.* ver. 9. *Saved from wrath through him.* John xiv. 6. *He is the way to the father, and no man cometh to the father but by him.* Joh. x. 9. *I am the door. By me if any man enter in.* Joh. xvi. 23. *Ask the father in my Name.* Heb. vii. 25. *Come to God by him.* 1 Pet. i. 21. *By Him do believe in God.* Heb. x. 19, 20. *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.* *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us.* Eph. ii. 18. *Through Him have access to the Father.* Chap. v. 20. *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. ii. 5. *offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* Eph. i. 6. *made us acceptable in the beloved.* 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. *God hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ*

Christ. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

For as the mediation of Christ was designed to secure the divine honour, and open a way for the exercise of divine grace to the glory of God the Father, and as he hath finished the work appointed him to do; so through Him God can consistently with his honour, call and invite a guilty world to return and be reconciled, and can stand ready to pardon and receive to favour, and give eternal life to all that come to him in Christ's name. And whosoever shall hear God's call, understand and believe the gospel, may see sufficient warrant to come, may 'have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, to come to God by him;' and such shall be justified in his Name, freely by divine grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, be accepted themselves in the beloved, and their spiritual sacrifices be acceptable to God by him, and through him they may have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And whatsoever they ask in his name shall be granted. For through him they may have access to God.—And

THE same view of the glory of the holy majesty of heaven and earth, which brings us to see, that God and his law are wholly right, and our disaffection and rebellion wholly wrong, and infinitely criminal, and so to see our need of Christ's mediation, righteousness and atonement; at the same time discovers God to be the supreme good, and the gospel to be true. In consequence of which, it appears our highest duty and highest interest to return to God, the fittest and happiest thing in the world. This begets an inclination to return to God as our sovereign Lord and supreme good. And so a foundation for repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and for every filial grace, is at once laid in the soul.

WE return to God in *Christ's name*, conscious eternal destruction is our just desert. Our courage, our boldness, even all our hope of acceptance, is from the mere grace and infinite goodness of God through Jesus Christ. Hell our due, we look only to 'free grace through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.' Our whole dependence

pendence rests here : and this is what St. Paul calls, *faith in Christ's blood*. It implies an understanding and belief of the report of the gospel, as to the nature of Christ's mediatorial office and work, and an exercise of heart towards the Mediator, answerable to the nature of his office and work, called *receiving him*, and *believing in his name* ; and denoted by those phrases so often used in the New Testament, when speaking of a sinner's coming to God, *by Christ, through Christ, in the name of Christ*. For to come to God *by Christ, through Christ, in the name of Christ*, and *by faith in Christ's blood*, are all of the same import.

To say, that faith consists in ' the bare belief of the bare truth,' without admitting any other idea into its definition, does not come up to the plain purport of these phrases, which evidently denote a dependance on him as Mediator. To come to God in his name, by him and through him, who is the appointed Mediator between God and man, is not only to believe him to be such, but also to be affected towards him as such, in all our approaches to God. It is not only to believe him to be the Messiah, but to believe in his name as such, and to have *boldness to enter into the holiest by his blood**.

Should

* Object.—*To come to God in the name of Christ* is the fruit of faith, and not that faith itself by which we are justified. He who believes the gospel to be true has the whole of that which the New Testament means by justifying faith. He will come to Christ, and come to God in the name of Christ ; but these are the fruits of faith, and not faith itself.

Ans.—I grant these are the fruits of faith. That is, the fruits of a belief of the truth of the gospel. But the question is still undetermined, which is this. Does not the New Testament mean to comprehend this belief and these fruits of it, in justifying faith ? or does this belief justify a sinner prior to these effects ? our Saviour said, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*. If a bare belief that he was the Messiah entitled to eternal life, then one who believed this had a title to eternal life before he came to him, and if so, he had no need to come to him that he might have life. Our Saviour directed his disciples to ask all things of the father in his name. He also taught

SHOULD a soldier, belonging to the army of prince Ferdinand, steal away into the Prussian camp, and attempt to murder that noble hero, the king of Prussia, to whose glory prince Ferdinand is most firmly attached. Should this wicked foldier be apprehended, condemned to die, and brought forth to the gallows. And while both armies are assembled to see the execution, and agreed to cry, "away with such a vile fellow from the earth, he is not fit to live," should prince Ferdinand step

taught them every day to pray, *Forgive us our Debts.* Query. How can we go to God in the name of Christ for the pardon of daily transgressions, if pardon is not to be obtained this way. If pardon is had "by a bare belief of the bare truth, we are not in the belief of the truth to ask for pardon in the name of Christ, because we are pardoned already. And so we are never to ask pardon in the name of Christ at all. Before we believe the gospel we cannot do it: and when we believe the gospel, it is too late; for we are pardoned already. And if we sin, as we daily do, we must never look to God in the name of Christ for pardon, repent and pray, looking toward the holy temple, as the Jews were directed to do, 1 Kin. viii. but only believe the gospel to be true. That is, believe that there is forgiveness with God through the atonement. But we are not to say, *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* For this is something more than "a bare belief of the bare truth." And so is not proper in order to obtain pardon. And so neither at first conversion, nor through the course of our lives, have we any occasion, nor ought we to look up to God in the name of Christ, and pray, saying, *forgive us our debts.* We must only believe the gospel to be true, and in this belief, according to Mr. Sandeman, we are to be perfectly "passive," "no act, exertion or exercise of the human mind" is to be in the affair. For pardon at first conversion and afterwards is, he grants, to be obtained in the same way, *Letters on Theron, p. 418.* — A wrong notion of the gospel led Mr. S. to this wrong notion of faith. For if this is the sum of the gospel, "There is forgiveness with God for impenitent sinners through the atonement, to be by God dispensed according to his sovereign pleasure, in a sovereign way: then, in the nature of things, there is ground only for a
passive

step forth, and before all the multitude justify the law by which he is condemned to die, and offer a ransom for his life to the acceptance of his Prussian Majesty ; and then turning to this wicked foldier, should he declare, ‘ O guilty wretch, repent of this thy wickedness, and on thy knees ask pardon of his Prussian Majesty in my name, and thy sin shall be blotted out :’ Would not the meaning of the words be easy to the understanding of all the assembled multitude. Not his repentance, nor his asking pardon in prince Ferdinand’s name, do in the least counterbalance his crime, or pay a ransom for his life. Prince Ferdinand’s mediation, ransom, and declaration are the sole foundation of hope to the guilty wretch. Emboldened by these, he falls at his Prussian majesty’s feet, and with a penitent heart, looks up to him for pardon in prince Ferdinand’s name. And, in this way, is forgiven, simply on prince Ferdinand’s account. †—But no similitude from earthly things

“ passive belief of this truth.” There is in fact no room for any “ act, exertion or exercise of the human mind,” in the affair. But if the gospel reveals God as ready to be reconciled to all that come to him in the name of Christ, then no sooner do I believe the Gospel to be true, but I also come to him in the name of Christ.—As to what is implied in the declaration of the gospel, see sect. VII. and VIII. If it should appear, that there is no forgiveness with God for impenitent sinners, while such, Mr. S. scheme, must be esteemed fundamentally wrong.—

† But should the wicked foldier be too stomachful to fall upon his knees and ask pardon in prince Ferdinand’s name, his belief, that in this way pardon might be obtained, would not entitle him to it, but rather render him the most inexcusable man alive.—So had an Israelite, bitten with a fiery serpent, believed, that whosoever looked up to the brazen serpent should be healed, but not desiring a cure, should he refuse to look up, his belief would not have healed him.—So had Peter’s hearers, on the day of Pentecost, when pricked at the heart to think they had murdered the Messiah, refused to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the call they had, their belief that he was the Messiah, and that there was forgiveness with God through his name, would,

things can fully reach the case before us, because the infinite dignity of the great King of the Universe, against whom we have rebelled, not only renders our past but even our present guilt, infinitely great. The true convert therefore not only deserves eternal damnation in the highest exercises of repentance, every whit as much as he did before, according to law and strict justice : but also deserves eternal damnation afresh for the imperfections attending his very repentance. The blood of Christ, and the gracious declarations of the gospel, are therefore in an eminent and peculiar sense, the only foundation of hope there is in his case.—But of this more afterwards.

VII. If the design of Christ's mediatorial office, labours and sufferings, was to do honour to the divine law, and if hereby he has opened a way for the honourable exercise of divine grace towards sinners ; then on the cross of Christ every motive, every encouragement to repentance for sin, and a hearty reconciliation to God is collected and brought to a point. God is declared to be an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour and universal obedience : the divine law is declared

would not have entitled them to pardon. And therefore " a bare belief of the bare truth," is not the whole of what is comprized in the scripture notion of justifying faith. But, says Mr. Sandeman (*Letters on Theron* p. 417) " if more than a bare persuasion of the truth be admitted as requisite to justification" the whole of christianity is overthrown :—to which it may be answered, that *Peter made repentance requisite*, Acts ii. 38 and iii. 19.—But says Mr. Sandeman, " the sincere penitent may be saved without any Christ or atonement at all p. 89, &c. No : Peter not only said, *repent*, but also *be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*. And constantly affirmed, that there is *no other name whereby we must be saved* ; Peter's penitents therefore could be saved only in the name of Christ.—But to say, that repentance is before forgiveness, overthrows the whole gospel, in Mr. Sandeman's view ; and indeed, it does overthrow his whole gospel, viz. that there is forgiveness with God through the atonement for impenitent sinners, while such before any act, exercise, or exertion of the mind. But of this more in section V. and VIII.

to be holy, just, good, and glorious : our disaffection and rebellion to be altogether groundless, and infinitely criminal : and yet we have the fullest proof, that God is ready to forgive, through the blood of his own son, all those who repent and return to him, in the name of Christ. In which, all the motives and encouragements to repentance and reconciliation are virtually comprized. Had the Son of God died, because the law was too severe, to purchase abatements, &c. the Cross of Christ itself, had justified our disaffection to that perfect rule of right, and our enmity to the divine character therein exhibited. The Cross of Christ had declared, that we were right, and that God was wrong. But when he obeys the law himself, and in his own body bears its curse on the tree, in our room and stead, because the law was good, to do it honour ; if we still object, we have no cloke for our sin. Nay, we must give up our objections, or renounce christianity. To believe the gospel to be true, is to give up all our objections as impious and blasphemous ; to acknowledge God to be wholly right ; and take all the blame to ourselves. To come cordially into the import of Christ's death, is to look upon God as infinitely glorious, and ourselves as infinitely odious. Truth sealed by that blood which made atonement, and opened a way for our pardon. And if God is infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and universal obedience ; and if we never had any reason to be disaffected to him ; and if our rebellion from first to last has been entirely groundless, nay, infinitely criminal ; and if yet after all, God is ready to forgive us on Christ's account, and invites us to return and be reconciled through him, and offers in this way to become our God and Father for ever ; what farther, by way of motive or encouragement, can be presented before our minds, to induce us to repent and be converted to return and be reconciled to God ? and yet, all this, is set in the strongest point of light on the Cross of Christ, if he died, because the law was good, to do it honour. Compare Romans iii. 25, 26. and 2 Corinth. v. 20, 21.

THERE can now therefore be nothing but our disinclination to a reconciliation to God, that can be as a
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bar in the way of our return. For on God's side, all things are ready, and he invites us to come. His "oxen and fatlings are killed"; the feast is prepared, the doors of his house, the gates of heaven are open, and we apostate hell-deserving rebels have not only free liberty to return to our allegiance, but are urged, are beseeched, and that by God himself and by his Son, to be reconciled.—Every beauty meets in the divine character, and every excellency in his government, our disaffection is not only groundless, but infinitely criminal; and all this is declared, is sealed and confirmed, by the very blood that was shed to make atonement. Nothing therefore can keep us back but our own hearts, nor can the fault be any where but in ourselves. How inexcusable our guilt, how aggravated our damnation, if, after all, we refuse to return and be reconciled!

SHOULD any say, "I do look upon the divine law, holy, just and good: and I feel reconciled to God."—Well: but how came this to pass?—"I believed myself delivered from the curse, and that God was reconciled to me."—If this is all, you are still blind and deaf to the import of the Cross of Christ, which declares the divine character to be perfect in beauty, and his law to be holy, just and good, previous to the consideration of our being pardoned; and that our disaffection to the divine character and government was inexcusable and infinitely criminal; and would have remained so, had we never been forgiven. 'Tis not the divine character and government, therefore, you are reconciled to; but the whole of your reconciliation consists in a belief that you are safe. And this is not to be reconciled to God; it is only to love yourself.—"But it is impossible I should be reconciled to God on any other ground."—that is, impossible you should look on the divine character and government perfect in beauty, without a blemish, although thus declared to be, on the cross of Christ, and the declaration sealed with the blood of God's own son.—Christ died to condemn your sin; to declare your disaffection infinitely vile: you extenuate your sin, and justify your disaffection: and cry "'tis im-

impossible I should do otherwise.”—“ impossible to look upon God as a lovely being, only in a belief of his love to you.”——Which is implicitly to say, that there is “ no loveliness in the divine nature only on account of his love to you.” And so, if you are damned, God will be no longer God.—Language, not of a humble penitent, but of a haughty rebel : not harmonizing with the import of the Cross of Christ ; but exactly the reverse. For had it not been a becoming, glorious thing in God to punish sin according to its desert, the death of Christ had been entirely needless.

S E C T I O N V.

Sin an infinite Evil.

AS to the degree of faultiness there is in sin, or in other words, as to the degree of blameworthiness there is in a creature's becoming disaffected to, and rising in rebellion against, the infinitely glorious God that made him, it cannot be determined by the sentiments of the rebels themselves, who will naturally be apt to extenuate their fault, and justify their conduct. There is no so easy and safe a way to determine this point with exactness, as to appeal to the judgment of God, who knows what our obligations to obedience precisely are, and with the greatest exactitude balances the degree of our blame. And besides, it is by his judgment this matter is to be finally decided.

BUT the divine law, which is a transcript of the divine nature, and which expresses the very sentiments of his heart, and by which he will finally judge the world, in the penalty it has threatened to the transgressor, exactly determines what God's judgment is in this case. In which it is written, *curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* Gal. iii. 10. This curse contains all that evil, which the law threatens, and which Christ came to deliver us from, and which the wicked will be doomed to at the day of judgment. What the wicked will be doomed to at the day of judgment, when God will render to every man according to his works, our Saviour has determined in the most express manner, Mat. xxv. 41, 46. *Depart from me, ye curst, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.* It will be more tolerable for some wicked men at the day of judgment than for others, as some are guilty of fewer and less aggravated crimes.

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Mat. xi. 20—24. but however different the degrees of pain will be to different persons, yet the misery of each one will be eternal: i. e. infinite in point of duration. For no one is ever to be released out of hell. For *there is a great gulf fixed*. Luk. xvi. 26. and *the fire is never to be quenched*, and *the worm never to die*. Mar. ix. 44, 46, 48. for the wicked are to be punished with *everlasting destruction*, 2 Theff. i. 9. and as the divine law denounces the curse for the first transgression, for any one sin; so there is consequently no one breach of the divine law, but what in the judgment of God deserves everlasting misery. But everlasting misery is an infinite punishment. And therefore in the judgment of God there is an infinite evil in sin. Yea, there is no one transgression of the divine law, but what is infinitely evil.

AND it must be remembered, that this law, in which the judge of all the earth threatens eternal misery for any one transgression, for not *continuing in all things*, was in force and binding on all mankind, antecedently to a consideration of the gift of Christ and the work of redemption by him: and was by God esteemed to be *holy, just, and good*: and the *whole world*, Jew and Gentile, were by him looked upon as *guilty*, their *mouths stopped without excuse*, no objection against his law, no plea in their own behalf to make: not one word to say. And in this view, he gave his only begotten Son to die in their stead. To deny this, is to renounce the gospel. And all, who believe that Christ died to save sinners from the eternal torments of hell, must grant, that antecedent to a consideration of his death, they were justly exposed to such a punishment, as otherwise his death for this end had been needless. But if they were justly exposed to such a punishment antecedently to a consideration of his death, then sin, previous to a consideration of the grace of the gospel, was an infinite evil.—But

I. If sin is an infinite evil, antecedently to a consideration of the gift of Christ, then God is infinitely worthy of supreme love and universal obedience from us, considered merely as being what he is in himself, and our creator. For if he is not infinitely worthy, we cannot be infinitely obliged. And if our obligations

are not infinite, we cannot be infinitely to blame. It is, therefore, the plain import of the divine law, that the God who made us, and whose we are, is an absolutely perfect, and so an infinitely glorious and amiable being. And that, on this account, we are under infinite obligations to love and obey him.—Therefore

THAT love to God which arises *merely* from self-love, in a belief that Christ died for me, that my sins are forgiven, and that I shall be saved, is not that kind of love which the divine law requires, but a love essentially different. For, one, wholly blind to the beauty of the divine nature, and at enmity to the divine character as exhibited in the law, and so in the eye of the law, dead in sin, may be full of this kind of love, even as full of it, as the carnal Israelites were of joy at the side of the Red Sea.

AND to deny that God is to be loved by believers, with that kind of love which the divine law requires, is to say, that the law is not a rule of life to believers: it is to set aside the divine law and real holiness; and to substitute affections merely selfish and wholly graceless in their room. And this is the essence of *Antinomianism*.

It is true, the gift of Christ, considered as a benefit done to us, lays us under infinite obligations to love God with a love of gratitude. But at the same time, the very nature of the gift supposes, that we were *before* under infinite obligations to love God for his own excellency, and infinitely to blame for not loving him; as otherwise the gift of Christ to be a curse to redeem us from the curse of the law, had been needless. Now practically to deny the infinite amiableness of the deity, and our infinite obligations to love him, as such; and then to pretend to love God for the gift of his son, is as though we should say, "God does not deserve the love the law requires. The law was therefore an unrighteous law. But Christ has redeemed us from it's curse, and we are glad." Which declaration would be a full proof of our enmity to God and to his Son.

II. If sin is an infinite evil, if not to love the infinitely glorious God our maker with all our hearts, so as from love to be perfectly obedient to his will in thought, word and deed, is an infinite evil; then those who

who are wholly blind to the holy beauty of the divine nature, and consequently entirely destitute of true love and of true obedience, are in the sight of God infinitely to blame, for every thought, word and action. *The plowing of the wicked is sin.* Prov. xxi. 4. *The prayers of the wicked are sin.* Prov. xxviii. 9. *The sacrifices of the wicked are abomination to the Lord.* Prov. xv. 8. They are, in the whole frame of their hearts, and in the whole tenor of their lives, contrary to the divine law. Rom. viii. 7, 8. *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God.* And ver. 9. this is the character of all who *have not the spirit of Christ.* And therefore, the whole frame of their hearts, and the whole tenor of their lives, is infinitely odious, hateful and ill-deserving in the sight of God; exactly agreeable to the import of the curse of the divine law.—Therefore,

WHEN once a sinner's eyes come to be opened really to view things as they in fact are, his false hopes, his self-righteous claims will be dropped in a moment; and the justice of God in his damnation be clear beyond dispute. And God's disposition to punish sin according to law, no longer appear as a blemish, but rather as a beauty in the divine character. And *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*, not an ill, but rather a glorious perfection in the deity.—However these views, and an answerable frame of heart, will not in the least diminish his desert of eternal damnation; any more than the penitence of a wilful murderer will exempt him from the gallows.—For

III. If sin is an infinite evil, then he who is enlightened in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, believes the gospel with all his heart, repents and is converted, still deserves, considered as in himself, and compared with the law of God, that perfect rule of right, eternal damnation as much as ever he did,* because his present

* Some late writers, in their zeal against a self-righteous spirit, hardly dare allow faith to be an *act*, lest it should be made a righteousness of. Just as a self-righteous heart could not

sent goodness does not in the least counterbalance his former badness. Nay, instead of paying past debts, he runs continually deeper into debt; as he still falls short of that perfect love and obedience which he owes to God. And so instead of deserving pardon for old sins, he merits damnation constantly by his new ones. There is therefore absolutely no hope in the case of a true penitent, but from the mere grace of God through Jesus Christ. On the foot of law, there is no more hope in the case of a penitent, than in the case of an impenitent sinner. Because according to law and strict justice, he deserves to be damned now, as much as he did before. For his repentance, which is but of finite worth, when cast into the balance in opposition to his guilt, which is infinite, is lighter than if the smallest atom of matter were flung into one scale, and the whole material system into the other. For there is some proportion between the least atom of matter, and the whole material system; but there is no proportion between finite and infinite. And therefore, as in the eye of law, so in the eye of an enlightened conscience, the most exalted virtue of the most eminent saint stands for nothing: i. e. is

make a righteousness of a *passive* as well as of an *active* faith, and be as proud of his *passivity* as the Pharisee was of his *fasting twice in the week*. Was this Paul's way to take down a proud self-righteous heart! who was so skilful and *mighty to pull down*!—No—far from it—he took quite another method, a method in its own nature apparently suited to answer the end. It was to hold forth the divine law in all its strictness and with all its curses, as holy, just, and good. Witness his Epistle to the *Romans* and *Galatians*,—Not any distinction between *active* and *passive* was ever mentioned by him, or has the least tendency to humble a proud heart. But to view ourselves in the light of the divine law, will give us our true character, and let us see just what we deserve at the hands of God our judge, and our absolute need of Christ and free grace. It was Paul's maxim, *the law is a school-master to bring us to Christ*. Nor can any man possibly see his need of Christ, but by the law; and the law considered as holy, just, and good. For to do honour to the law as such, was the design of Christ's mediation, and that without which his mediation had not been needful for the salvation of sinners.—And by the law, the most holy and active saint needs Christ as much as the chief of sinners.

absolutely of no weight at all in the least conceivable degree to counterbalance for any one sin : and so he sensibly needs Christ and free grace along with the chief of sinners.

To deny this, would be, virtually, to give up the whole of divine revelation.—For in this view the divine law threatens eternal death, for any one transgression, without leaving any room for repentance to alleviate the sentence. The transgressor is doomed to eternal misery without hope. This is plain fact. Gal. iii. 10. and this law is declared to be holy, just and good, to be just what in reason it ought to be ; and in this view of it the lawgiver judged it inconsistent with reason and justice, and therefore inconsistent with the honour of his righteous government, to exempt a sinner from the threatened punishment, in virtue of any atonement of less value than the blood of his own son. Another plain fact, Rom. iii. 25, 26. He, who denies these two facts, must give up the whole of divine revelation. And to grant them, is to grant all that has been asserted.

It is possible a sinner may be brought to repentance by divine grace before he is forgiven *. Yea, it is certain, no sinner ever was pardoned till he did repent. Luke xiii. 5. Acts iii. 19. But it is impossible, that a sinner should ever be justified under any other notion, than as being ungodly. Rom. iv. 5. For one sin in the eye of the law, and so in the eye of God the judge, denominates a man ungodly, and subjects him to eternal damnation. Gal. iii. 10. Nor can any future penitency make any imaginable satisfaction ; he must be justified therefore by God, as being ungodly or not at all.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon ; was the language of the Old Testament—*And repent and be converted, that your sin may be blotted out ;* is the language of the new.—Not that the pe-

* This all *Antinomians* deny : For as true repentance arises from love to God, and implies love to his law, they say, it is impossible to love God or his law, till first we know that our sins are forgiven ; and so it is impossible, that repentance should take place before forgiveness. Of which, more hereafter.

nitent Jew, on the foot of law and justice, could by his repentance be exempted from death. Nay, just the contrary did the penitent Jew acknowledge, when he came before the altar, bringing a bull or a goat to die in his room. For "I have sinned, I deserve to die," was the import of his conduct. Nor, neither, that the penitent Christian does not deserve the damnation of hell, notwithstanding his penitency; for this, in the most explicit manner, is acknowledged, in *asking pardon in the name of Christ*. For if he is not so bad, as to deserve eternal damnation, he does not need *that pardon* which the gospel offers. Much less does he need the son of God to die in his stead, that God may be just, and yet justify him. So that to *ask pardon in the name of Christ*, is the most explicit acknowledgment, that eternal damnation is our due, by law; and that the law is holy, just and good, a glorious law, worthy to be magnified and made honourable by the obedience and death of the Son of God*.

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* Some of the chief maxims on which St. *Pau*'s reasons throughout his epistle to the *Galatians*, to prove that no man can be justified on the foot of his own virtue, are these. "The divine law requires sinless perfection on the penalty of eternal damnation for the least defect, Chap. iii. 10." There is "no other law given, ver. 21.—If justification could have been obtained by this law, the death of Christ had been needless, Chap. ii. 21."—And from these maxims he cuts off all self righteous hopes by the roots.—To assert therefore, that there is a law given, by which a sinner may be justified in the sight of God on the foot of his own virtue, short of sinless perfection, and without any need of Christ's atonement, even on condition of sincere repentance, is flatly to contradict the Apostle.—It is surprizing therefore to find so sagacious a writer as Mr. *Sandeman* declaring this with such great assurance: and equally surprizing, that he should think to prove his point from the xviiith and xxxiii^d Chapters of *Ezekiel*; when every pious Jew knew, that let his repentance be ever so sincere, yet according to the whole tenor of the Mosaic dispensation, *without shedding of blood there could be no remission*, Deut. xxvii. 26. Heb. ix. 22. See *Letters on Theron*, p. 89, 90.

If it should be inquired, what led so learned a writer, to commit such a blunder?—It was in support of his leading design

If the divine law requires that we love God with all our hearts, and yield a perfect obedience to his will; and if our original natural obligations to love and obey him are so great, that according to reason and justice, we

sign, the darling point in his scheme, viz. that there is forgiveness with God through Christ for impenitent sinners while such, before any "act, exercise, or exertion of their minds" whatsoever." And consequently before repentance. A "passive belief" of which, he says, "quiets the guilty conscience, begets hope, and so lays a foundation for love."—For if a penitent sinner may be justified on the foot of his own goodness, without any respect to Christ and his atonement, none can stand in any need of Christ and his atonement, but impenitent sinners. And so his main point is proved, for the only design of Christ's death of consequence must be to procure pardon for impenitent sinners remaining such. For if ever they should be brought to repentance, according to his scheme, they may be justified on the foot of their own goodness, without any need of Christ or his atonement.—And accordingly his good man is never brought to true repentance. "All his godliness consists in love to that which first relieved him." (*Letters to Mr. Pike*, p. 8.) and therefore his godliness does not at all consist in love to God's law, without which there can be no true repentance. And therefore he can by no means allow that the *cixth Psalm* gives the character of *David*, or is applicable to any other good man, because it abounds with such expressions of love to God's law. To whom then must it be applied? to *Christ*, he says: *forgetting what the Psalmist had said, ver. 67, before I was afflicted I went astray.* Which is a full proof that Christ, who never went astray, is not the person spoken of. *Letters on Theron*. p. 55, 117.

But from Mr. Sandeman's manner of reasoning, (p. 88.) it is easy to foresee that he will object, that if repentance is before forgiveness no child of *Adam* ever can be forgiven. For according to him, this sets pardon "as high above the reach of one whose conscience is awake, as the perfection required by the divine law itself. It must cost me as much labour to come within the reach of it as to conform my heart to the law of God. Of all corruptions of the gospel, this is the most dangerous"—However, he may be told, that dangerous as he thinks it is, the gospel was thus corrupted, if he will call it by that name, by Christ and his Apostles, who always taught, that repentance is before forgiveness, as will be proved in the sequel. And if he is for an easier way to

we deserve eternal wrath for the least defect; and if we measure ourselves by this rule, and judge of our character and desert by this standard, instead of finding any thing about ourselves to recommend us to God, we shall feel that
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Heaven than Christ and his Apostles taught, it is no good sign. Rather, it is the grand characteristic of a *popular preacher*, how odious soever the name sounds in his ears. So our Saviour declares, *Mat. vii. 13, 14, 15.*

If he should further object, that the plain design of the prophet *Ezekiel*, was to convince the self-righteous Jews in Babylon, that if they perished in their sins, the fault would be wholly in them—I readily grant it.—And one way he takes, to work this conviction in them, is to call upon them to repent, asserting, that there is a sure connection between repentance and forgiveness. Which was no new doctrine, as appears from *Lev. xxvi. 40—42. 1 Kin. viii. 46—50. Prov. xxviii. 13. Isai. lv. 7. Jer. iv. 4.* The only question is, whether the author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was mistaken, or not, in affirming, that under the Mosaic dispensation, *without shedding of blood there was no remission, Heb. ix. 22.*

Besides, if God could, consistent with the honour of his government, have granted remission of sins to a sincere penitent, without any atonement; by parity of reason, he might also, as well, have granted repentance, without any atonement. And so the death of Christ was wholly needless. Sinners might have had *repentance and remission of sins*, and eternal life, as well without, as with it. And thus *Christ is dead in vain*, and christianity overthrown, on Mr. Sandeman's scheme. For, if the death of Christ was needless, the gospel, which brings us the news of his death, is a fiction. For it must have been *foolishness* and not the *wisdom of God*; it must have been inconsistent with every divine perfection for God to have given his son to die, had his death been needless.—Mr. Sandeman therefore must give up his present scheme, or give up the gospel, or be inconsistent.—But how was it possible, that Mr. Sandeman should rightly understand and cordially believe the scripture doctrine of atonement, while his mind was so full of prejudice against the divine law? indeed he has not expressed his enmity against the divine law in such a shocking manner as Mr. Cudworth has done; but to an attentive reader it may be plain, they both view it in the same point of light: in itself, an ugly law. And all their love to God and his law arise merely from a belief or hope they are delivered from its curse; or rather strictly speaking, they have no love to God or to his law;

we are infinitely worthy of the divine wrath. And the more penitent any sinner in this world is, the more sensible he will be, that this is the truth. And accordingly St. Paul, who was doubtless the most humble, penitent, broken hearted sinner that ever lived, viewing things in this light, felt, after all his attainments, that he stood in as absolute need of Christ and free grace, as any other sinner in the world. *I through the law am dead to the law. I count all things but loss—that I win Christ, and be found in him.* And in this view he strenuously asserted, that *by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in the sight of God.* Not one, more than another : nor himself, more than the vilest wretch on earth.

WHEREFORE if saving faith implies in its nature repentance and conversion, and contains the seeds of every Christian grace ; yet it can have no influence in our justification in the sight of God, as *our virtue* : because considered, as such, it is of no weight to counterbalance our blame, if our blame is infinitely great ; no weight at all. The least sand in an hour glass, would do more towards counterbalancing the whole material system, all put into one scale, then the faith, repentance, and all the other graces of the best sinner in the world, would towards counterbalancing the smallest sin ; if the smallest sin is an infinite evil. And if we say, “ that the least sin is not an infinite evil,” we must, to be consistent, give up the divine law, and with that, the whole of divine revelation.

WE can be justified by faith, therefore, no otherwise than as faith is that, on our part, whereby we are united to Christ, and so become interested in him, in whom alone God is well pleased. Whose righteousness and atonement alone are sufficient to satisfy for our guilt, and qualify us for the divine favour and eternal life. Even as a woman is interested in her husband's estate by marriage, not as it is an *act of virtue* in her to marry him ; but as hereby she is *united* to him, and becomes

law ; but as Mr. Sandeman accurately expresses, all his Godliness consists in love to that which first relieved him,” viz. a belief there was forgiveness with God for impenitent sinners, while such. This he loved ; and this love is the whole of his religion.

one with him. 'Tis true, in the very act of marriage, in which, a woman receives a man for her husband, and gives herself to him, as his wife, all matrimonial duties are virtually implied : and *as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*, (Col. ii. 6.) is the sum of Christianity : but it is not the engagement of those matrimonial duties, nor is it the performance of them, which, under the notion of a virtue, entitles her to her husband's estate : she is interested in her husband's estate, simply by virtue of the relation which takes place in marriage. They two then become one flesh. And so one common interest commences. Eph. v. 32. *This is a great mystery*, is a lively emblem of our union with Christ. For by a true and living faith, which, in contradistinction from a dead faith, contains every Christian grace in embryo, we are united to Christ as the branch is to the vine, as the members of the body are to the head, as the wife is to her husband ; in consequence of which union, and not for our goodness, we are accepted in God's beloved son, and that simply on the account of his atonement and merits. And to use another of St. Paul's similitudes—A Jew had a title to an inheritance in the land of Canaan by birth ; not because it was a virtue to be born of Jewish parents ; but because he was thereby a child of Abraham. *So we are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. And if children, then heirs.* Gal. iii. 26—29.*

SOME seem to think that faith, repentance and sincere obedience, considered as our own goodness and virtue, give us an interest in Christ and in the favour of God through him. Which, to make the scheme consistent, supposes, that the penitent sinner is considered as being in himself good, and that his goodness is of so great weight in the sight of God, as to counterbalance his badness, and so gives him an interest in Christ. Which implies, that his guilt is not acknowledged to be infinite. For, if it were, it could not be imagined, that his goodness could be of any weight to counterbalance it. But if his guilt is not acknowledged to be infinite,

* See this subject treated at large, and with great accuracy, in Mr. Edwards Sermon on *Justification by Faith alone*.

the infinite excellency of the divine nature, and the justice of the law are virtually denied. A full proof, that the import of Christ's death is not understood by him, and that his faith and repentance are not genuine. And graceless graces are but poor things, for graceless men to make a righteousness of; if the noblest virtues of the most eminent saints are of no weight at all to counterbalance any one transgression of the divine law.

OTHERS, on the contrary extreme, seem to think, that sinners are justified, not only as being ungodly in the eye of the law, but also as being impenitent and unconverted in the eye of the gospel. And these make the whole of religion to result from a persuasion of God's love to them. And so the infinite excellency of the divine nature, the infinite evil of sin, and the true import of the cross of Christ, are left out of their views. And the divine law as a rule of life, is set aside. And a new kind of religion is substituted in the room of a conformity to the divine law. A kind of religion which has no holiness in its nature.

THAT there is a God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, in himself infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and universal obedience, is the first principle of all religion, and the foundation on which, that whole system of religion is built, which is contained in the holy scriptures. But this principle, how plain, and how fundamental soever it is, is left out of every false scheme of religion. The occasion is this: every false scheme of religion, formed in the fancy of a fallen creature, is contrived on purpose to suit and so to give ease and comfort to graceless hearts. But every graceless heart, is at enmity against the true God. Another God, of a character essentially different, must therefore be imagined, or a carnal heart cannot be suited, and so can never have ease. And this is done, in every false scheme of religion. And so all false schemes of religion in the christian world, are, in reality, only so many various kinds of idolatry.

THE angels in Heaven love a God, whose character they see it is, to hate sin as an infinite evil and punish it accordingly, exemplified before their eyes in the divine conduct towards their antient associates, for their

first transgression.—*Adam* in innocency loved a God, whose character he believed it was, to hate sin as an infinite evil, and punish it accordingly, held forth to his own view, in that law, *in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*—And all who understand the gospel, see its glory, and believe it to be true, love a God, whose character they see it is, to hate sin as an infinite evil, and punish it accordingly ; and this character is set before their eyes, in the most striking point of light, on the cross of Christ, and in the transactions of the final judgment.—And all those who do not love this character of God, do not love the true God.

Therefore,

For a sinner to love the true God, is, at the same time, to judge and condemn, to hate and abhor his own character, as being infinitely odious. We can have not so much as one good thought of the divine character, without giving up our own as infinitely abominable. The moment we begin to think that God's character is good, we begin to look upon our own as infinitely bad. For if it is a beautiful thing in God eternally to damn such as we are, it must be because we are infinitely odious and ill-deserving. And if it is not an amiable thing in God to hate and punish sin, as in fact he does, there is no moral beauty in his nature. For one bad property, entirely approved, and constantly exercised, must spoil any moral character, and render it, on the whole, entirely devoid of moral beauty.—But this point shall be taken into a more particular consideration in the following section.

SECTION

S E C T I O N VI.

Vindictive Justice an amiable Perfection in the Deity; a Beauty in the Divine Character.

VINDICTIVE justice is that perfection in the divine nature, whereby God is inclined to punish sin according to its desert. The degree of ill desert there is in sin, is determined by the penalty threatened in the divine law.

GOD's giving his son to die in our stead, to redeem us from the curse of the law, has led some to think, that God is not inclined to punish sin according to its desert: whereas his inclination to punish sin according to its desert induced him to give his son to die in our stead. When ZALUCUS made a law, that the adulterer should have both his eyes put out, as the punishment of his crime; his inclination to punish adultery, according to what he supposed it deserved, induced him, in order to save his son, who had committed adultery, from losing both his eyes, to consent, that one of his own should be put out instead of one of his. And his consenting to this, and its being actually done, instead of arguing that he was not inclined to punish adultery according to its supposed desert, was really the fullest proof of his inclination so to do, that could have been given. Nor could the supreme king of the universe have given a clearer and stronger proof, that his inclination to punish sin according to its desert was well grounded, fixed and unchangeable, than to give his own son to suffer in the room of the sinner, altogether equivalent to what he was exposed to; *to be made a curse, to redeem him from the curse.* And the impenitent sinner may depend upon it, he shall not escape. *For if these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

VINDIC-

VINDICTIVE justice, in the deity, has nothing in its nature inconsistent with his infinite goodness. And his infinite goodness, has nothing in its nature inconsistent with vindictive justice. All the divine perfections are harmonious. Nay, all the moral perfections of the Deity are really but one. *GOD is love*

LOVE is the sum of that duty which God requires of us in the moral law. The moral law is a transcript of the moral perfections of the divine nature. Therefore love is the sum of the moral perfections of the divine nature.

God is love.---Love to Being in general. Chiefly, to the first, the great, the infinite Being, the fountain and source of all Being.—And secondarily, to finite Beings. And love to virtue, to order, to harmony, in the intellectual system. And so all his nature is summed up in this edict, the fundamental law in his kingdom, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself*. Which is suited to give unto God the glory due unto his name, and to bring all finite intelligences to feel and conduct towards him and one another, as is fit, in which also their highest happiness lies.

To break this fundamental law of his kingdom, is implicitly to turn enemy to Being in general ; to God the infinitely great and glorious Being, to the system, to virtue, to order, to harmony ; in a word, to all good. Love itself therefore, as it exists in the deity, who is at the head of the universe, and whose office it is to govern the world, is a *consuming fire* with respect to sin. And armed with almightiness, and directed by infinite wisdom, is immutably determined to bear testimony against it, as an infinitely odious, hateful, ill deserving thing. And so the words of the law express the temper of God's heart. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things*. But this fury and wrath is nothing but love. This curse to the sinner, is love to Being in general, i. e. love to God, and to the best good of the universe. As when a wife and righteous monarch puts a traitor to death, it is not because he delights in the death of his subjects, or takes pleasure in their pain simply considered ; but it is because he delights in the honour and safe-

ty of his crown, and the general good of his kingdom. And all his loyal subjects, who are affected towards his crown and kingdom, as he is, will see a beauty in his conduct.*

* Will see a beauty in his conduct, and yet not "delight in the misery" of their fellow-creatures—and so we may see the beauty of vindictive justice and be affected accordingly, and yet "not delight in own eternal destruction." Indeed, if an earthly monarch required his subjects, on pain of death, to do what was in its own nature "utterly impossible," not through the badness of their hearts, but as being inconsistent with the constitution of reasonable creatures: then, as in this case, no punishment would be deserved; so he could have no motive to punish his subjects, unless he delighted himself in their destruction. And so no beauty could be seen in a Monarch's inflicting pain in such a case, unless we suppose it beautiful in him to love the misery of his subjects. And for one, doomed to death under such a Monarch, to see a beauty in his conduct, would, I own, be the same thing, as to love his own misery. And this seems to be Mr. *Cudworth's* view of the divine character, as exhibited in his law; to love which, he thinks is the same thing, as to "love our own eternal destruction."—Mr. *Cudworth's* notions of the diety are surprizingly inconsistent. One while, God is supposed to be so much made up of malevolence, that to esteem his character beautiful, is to "love our own eternal destruction." And to love this God, is pronounced "utterly impossible," yea, "contrary to the law of God." And yet the indisputable duty of all mankind: but a duty which none ever did, or ever will, or ever lawfully can do—Another while, God is all made up of love to his creatures, only "disposed to make them happy, and to oppose what is contrary to their happiness;" and so of a character altogether lovely, even in the eyes of the vilest sinners, let them but believe, "that God loves them in particular."—And so here are two Gods; the one a cruel, hateful being, requiring on pain of damnation, that we should do, that, which is, in its own nature, wicked, "contrary to the law of God." And this God, it is "utterly impossible" to love. The other is a good, and lovely being, who aims at nothing but our happiness; and only requires us to believe that he loves us, and in that belief love him again—And thus it was with the *Manicheans* in the early ages of the Church, they maintained, that there were two Gods, the God of the Old Testament, a cruel, hateful being; and the God of the New Testament, a good, and lovely being. *Further Defence*, p. 221—226.

FOR

FOR many reasons private revenge is altogether improper and unfit: not that executing righteous vengeance, is in itself a bad thing. We strictly forbid private revenge among our children. "If your brother strikes you, you shall not strike him again," says the father: "But tell me, and I will take care of the matter." So parents order in their little kingdoms, and all the children in the family stand conscience convinced, when a naughty child is corrected by a wise and good father, that the father has done well. And all dutiful children will revere him the more, and love him the better for it. *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*, says the Apostle. An exhortation as full of benevolence as any one in the New Testament. To which he adds, in the same spirit, *dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves*. But why? was vengeance a bad thing in the Apostle's eyes? No. But they were not the proper persons. That matter belonged to the infinitely wise God, whose are all things in heaven and earth, and to whom the government of the world appertains. *For it is written, vengeance is mine, and I will repay saith the Lord*. Rom. xii, 18, 19. It is God's province to execute vengeance, and it is a God-like glorious thing in him to do it.

WHEREFORE when *Pharoah* (the type of finally impenitent sinners, Rom. ix. 17—22.) and his host lay overwhelmed in the Red-Sea, *Moses*, inspired by Heaven, sang, THE LORD HATH TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY! *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods! Who is like unto thee, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS!* Exod. xv.* And when

* *Glorious in Holiness*.—Vindictive Justice is a *holy*, and so a *glorious* perfection. The holiness of the divine nature inclines him to hate and punish sin. The great evil of sin consists in its being against God. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned*, Psal. li. 4. And it is chiefly in this view that God hates and punishes it; because it is a *despising God*, 2 Sam. xii. 10. and it is a glorious thing in God to punish it in this view. Mr. Cudworth thinks, that there is no loveliness in anything in God, but merely as "it tends to make us happy, and to oppose what is contrary to our happiness," p. 221. If God punishes sin merely for our good, it is lovely, let the punishment

when all the congregation of the Children of Israel murmured and rebelled against the Lord, on the return of the spies, for which they were by God doomed to fall in the wilderness, it was, in the eyes of the Holy ONE, so glorious and god-like a piece of conduct, that he said, *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*, Numb. xiv. 21. And when, in the days of *Isaiab*, God revealed his purpose, for their many crimes, to give up the Jews to blindness and deafness and hardness, till the land should be utterly desolate, the inhabitants of Heaven are represented, as in an extacy, crying one to another, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*, Isa. vi. And when the children of Moab and Ammon, the Edomites and Philistines, and all the neighbouring nations around the holy land, who from spite to the true God, and to the true religion, rejoiced in the destruction of Jerusalem, and captivity of the Jews: when, I say, they are by God devoted to destruction, it is constantly represented, as a conduct worthy of the Holy ONE of Israel, and to his honour, by the continual repetition of these words,

ment be so circumstanced, as to be an act of goodness and kindness to us, and it is beautiful, viewed in this light. But if it be viewed as an act of holiness, as an expression of God's regard to the honour of his great name, and hatred of sin as it is against God, then there is loveliness in it--and why?--Because we naturally love our selves, but regard not the honour of his great name. And so, to take care of our interest appears beautiful to us; but to take care of the rights of the godhead has no beauty in it. And so the atonement of Christ, on this hypothesis, has no beauty in it, considered as doing honour to God and to his law. And so all religion consists merely in selfish affections.—And thus when *Pharoah* was punished for his crimes, it appeared beautiful to the carnal Israelites, as they were safe themselves, and as his destruction was for their interest. But when it came to their own turn, their hearts were full of hatred and heart-risings. However, the divine conduct, in their punishment, was as beautiful, as in the punishment of the Egyptians. And nothing but criminal blindness could prevent its appearing to them in this light—to be sure, it appeared in this light in the eyes of the holy ONE of Israel.

and

and they shall know that I am the Lord, along through eight chapters together, from *Ezek. xxv.* And concerning Babylon, say the pious Jews, guided by inspiration, *bappy shall be he, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones*, *Psal. cxxxvii. 9.* And when mystical Babylon shall sink as a millstone into the sea, under the vengeance of the Almighty, and thousands be sent to hell at once, all heaven is represented as resounding with loud *Hallelujahs*, while the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever. *Rev. xix.* So that nothing can be plainer, than that vindictive justice is a glorious perfection in the divine nature, a beauty in his character, in the sight of holy beings through the intellectual system.—

But,

I. If vindictive justice is a glorious and amiable perfection in the deity, then the whole dark side of things, as some writers phrase it in his moral government of the universe, is full of light, glory and beauty. The ejection of the sinning angels out of heaven down to eternal darkness and despair, turning our first parents out of paradise, and dooming them and all their race to death and the final sentence to be passed on apostate angels and apostate men, at the day of judgment, are all perfect in beauty. The divine character as exhibited to view in these facts, is altogether glorious, and infinitely worthy of love; for it is a glorious thing in God thus to punish sin according to its desert.——Therefore

It can be owing to nothing but criminal blindness, to the spirit of a rebel, of an enemy, in any of God's subjects, that the glory of his character, as thus exhibited, does not shine into their hearts. It is a full proof they are unattached to the honour of God, and to the welfare of his holy kingdom, and care only for their own private interest.—

And therefore

No sooner is a sinner renewed, by the regenerating influences of the holy spirit, but he begins to see the beauty of vindictive justice, and to be affected accordingly. *The law as a ministration of death*, now begins to appear

appear glorious. For now he begins to see things as in fact they be. For now his eyes are opened.*

II. IF vindictive justice is a glorious and amiable perfection, then it was a glorious and amiable thing in God, to

* And in this view my *Theron* is made to say (p. 194.) "Let all Heaven for ever love and adore the infinitely glorious Majesty, although I receive my just desert and perish for ever."—But, says Mr. *Cudworth*, "this is a species of love beyond what *Adam* had in paradise, beyond the Apostles, the Scripture Saints, and even Jesus Christ himself," (p. 224.) Strange!—What, does not Jesus Christ look upon it as a glorious thing in his father to punish sin according to its desert? Does not he think his Father worthy to be loved and adored by all the heavenly Hosts, although he does so? and will not all holy beings cry, *Amen, Hallelujah*, at the last day, when they see the law put in execution? and pray, what is their motive? Is it the beauty of vindictive justice? or is it merely because they are safe, and care for none but themselves?—If the beauty of vindictive justice is the motive; then they all view things, to perfection, in the same light, in which a sinner begins, in great imperfection, to view them, when his eyes first begin to be opened.—But if vindictive justice is not a beauty in the divine character, in their eyes; and if they cry *Amen, Hallelujah*, merely because they are safe themselves, and care not what becomes of others; as must be the case on Mr. *Cudworth's* scheme, let him consider the consequences. Consequences, which will overthrow the whole of divine revelation, as will presently appear. And to quote texts of scripture to prove a point subversive of the whole scripture scheme, is certainly to pervert them. Besides, Mr. *Cudworth* is obliged to grant, (1) That the divine law does in fact require of all mankind without exception, that very kind of love to God, which he condemns in *Theron*. (2) That this law is holy, just, and good. And (3) that to deny the goodness of this law, is to overthrow Christianity, p. 226---230. And if in regeneration and repentance our eyes begin to be opened to see things as they be, and our hearts to be affected accordingly, then *Theron* is justified out of Mr. *Cudworth's* own mouth: and he has no way to avoid this consequence, but to contradict himself, and implicitly give up Christianity, in affirming, that the divine law, in requiring love to God before the pardon of sin, requires, (1) what implies "love to our own eternal destruction." and so (2) what is "utterly impossible." Yea, (3) what is in its own nature unreasonable,

to bruise HIM, and put HIS soul to grief, who had espoused our cause, and appeared as our representative, although he were his own SON. And it was a glorious thing in the Son of God incarnate, to say, *Thy Will be done*. But, if vindictive justice is not glorious, there is no glory in the cross of of Christ. And where no glory is, no glory can be seen.

III. If vindictive justice is an amiable, glorious perfection, then the grace of God in the gift of his son, was free grace indeed. If I was in fact, so criminal, so infinitely odious and ill-deserving, that it had been

able, "inconsistent with the original constitution of reasonable creatures," And so (4) what is in its own nature sinful, "contrary to the law of God." And thus he makes the divine law unreasonable and wicked, that he may justify the sinner in his non-conformity to it. And while he justifies the sinner, he renders needless the atonement of Christ, regeneration, repentance, and pardon, in this case.---And thus the whole gospel is overthrown.---To avoid this consequence, he turns short about, and affirms, that the sinner "ought to love God" and is self-condemned if he does not,"—"utterly impossible and contrary to the law of God," as it is—And in the midst of all this confusion and self-contradiction, he introduces the death of Christ to solve the difficulty, 'by delivering us from the curse of this *good wicked law* and grant a pardon in the midst of this self-justification and enmity, thereby to pacify our minds, and give us a good thought of that God, whose character before it was "utterly impossible" to love. And this is all the regeneration he will allow of. And he perverts every text of scripture he comes across, to support this inconsistent, self contradictory scheme of sentiments: mean while, nothing can be plainer, than that,—if God was amiable in the eyes of *Adam* in Paradise, in threatening to punish sin so severely: if he was amiable in the eyes of Christ, in persisting in this disposition after the fall; if to do honour to this character of his father, the Son of God incarnate died on the cross; if all true believers view Christ in this light, and love him as being thus his father's friend; then Mr. *Cudworth's* scheme stands condemned: "by *Adam* in Paradise, by the Apostles, by "all the Scripture Saints, with Jesus Christ himself at their "head." Who could not have been bribed by all the joys set before him, to have declared his father's righteousness, had he viewed the divine law in the light Mr. *Cudworth* does; an unreasonable, wicked law.

even

even a glorious piece of conduct in God, to have damned me for my sins, the grace which provides me relief, is mere, pure grace; pure grace indeed. God was so far, so very far from being obliged in justice to help me, that it had been a glorious act of justice, if God had said, *Depart thou cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* The grace therefore which provides relief, is free and glorious grace.—And as the freeness and greatness of the grace, arises from this view of the case; so it is only in this view of the case, that the freeness and greatness of the grace can be seen.—Therefore, those who are wholly blind to the beauty of vindictive justice, are wholly blind to the nature and glory of the grace of the gospel.—And therefore, that idea of free grace, which ravishes an *Antinomian* heart, is a mere imagination, formed in his own fancy, and not the true grace of the gospel.

IV. If vindictive justice is a glorious and amiable perfection in the divine nature, then God is altogether lovely. There is not one blemish in his character; his character viewed in every point of light is perfect in beauty. That is, he is, in fact, what he claims to be
BY NATURE GOD.—

Therefore,

OUR disaffection to the deity is perfectly groundless, and we have no cloak for our sin, but are absolutely without excuse, our mouths are stopped, and we guilty before God, even prior to a consideration of the grace of the gospel.—And therefore,

If now, after we have the gospel revelation, in which we are invited, kindly and earnestly invited to return to God in the name of Christ, with a promise of divine forgiveness, and even of eternal life through him, we do not return and become heartily reconciled, we shall deserve an aggravated damnation indeed. The heathen world, who never heard of the grace of the gospel, may, for their disaffection to the divine character, which is perfect in beauty, be with *Tyre* and *Sidon*, justly damned; but we, with *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida*, and *Caper-naum*, shall deserve a damnation aggravated beyond expression. *There shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.*

To

To say, that vindictive justice is not a glorious and amiable perfection, is subvertive of all religion, natural and revealed.

If vindictive justice is not a glorious and amiable perfection, then there is one blemish in the divine character, one bad property in the divine nature, which, yet, it is plain from the whole tenor of his conduct, that God heartily approves of and loves; which, therefore, must spoil his whole character; and render it on the whole an unamiable character; a character that cannot be heartily liked and cordially loved. For one bad property, entirely approved of, and constantly exercised will ruin any moral character, and render it devoid of all moral beauty.

If it was a bad thing in God, to cast out the rebel angels, as he did, to eternal pains; the elect angels can never forgive it: but must eternally look on their tortures as the effect of something bad in the deity, and stand ready to justify their blasphemies, and so will really be on the devil's side, notwithstanding all the bounties of Heaven to them. For the bounties of a tyrant can never win the esteem of noble and generous minds, and how must the death of an incarnate God, on this hypothesis, fill all holy beings with horror. Such a sacrifice as this to tyranny, is beyond imagination dreadful! all the bounties of Heaven to the elect from among mankind, can never reconcile them to such a character, unless we suppose them to be absolutely selfish, void of all goodness, while they for ever behold their fellow creatures, their neighbours, their brethren, their sisters, their sons, their daughters, crying, weeping, wailing, gnashing their teeth, under eternal tortures, all the effect of something bad in the deity.

So that, if vindictive justice in the divine nature, is not amiable and glorious, there is no beauty at all in the divine character, and he can never be loved. And so there is an everlasting end to all religion in the intellectual system. For where there is no love to God, there is no religion.

To say, that vindictive justice is no part of God's moral character, is to give up the Old and New Testament, both at once; as well as to contradict a thousand
appear-

appearances in common Providence. And, so it is to plunge into downright infidelity, and is little or nothing short of the grossest atheism.

So that, we have our choice to approve the divine character as it stands in the Bible, as being without a blemish, perfect in beauty ; or to turn infidels, and sink down into a total uncertainty about every thing in the moral system. To do the first, is the introduction into the christian life. To do the latter, is to begin to feel that blackness of darkness which is to be the portion of God's enemies to all eternity ; or at least, it is an introduction to it.

OBJECTION. " IT is true, God's character as exhibited to view in the law, is not amiable, nor can it be loved. But his character as exhibited in the gospel, is altogether lovely.*"

ANSWER. A hateful character, and a lovely character are two characters essentially different ; nay, contrary to each other. But two characters essentially different cannot belong to that one God, who is *THE SAME YESTERDAY, to-day, and for ever.*---To look upon the character the

* The design of every false scheme of religion is to render the divine character agreeable to the taste of a carnal heart : but to every carnal heart, vindictive justice appears not a beauty, but a blemish ; and such a blemish as spoils God's whole character, and renders it "utterly impossible" to love him. 'Till then carnal men leave vindictive justice out of their idea of God, at least, with reference to themselves, they cannot love God, or "conceive any loveliness in his nature." Some false schemes declare that vindictive justice is no part of the divine character. God intends to make all his creatures finally happy. Other false schemes declare, that, although it is a part of the divine character, yet it is not to be loved. I am to view God as one that loves me, and merely in that view am I to love him : but to love vindictive justice is "utterly impossible." Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, imply in their nature, a sense of the beauty of vindictive justice. And so the true Christian loves God's real character. While a wrong idea of God excites the love of every unregenerate man. A kind of love to such a kind of a God, as is consistent with reigning enmity against the true God. Rom. viii. 7. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

divine

divine law gives of God, as odious ; to look upon the character the gospel gives of God, as amiable ; and to hate the God of the law, and to love the God of the gospel ; is a kind of religion, which puts one in mind of the *Manichean* scheme, in ancient times ; who professed to believe, “ that there were two Gods, the God of “ the Old Testament, an evil, cruel, hateful being, “ and the God of the New Testament, a good, kind, “ lovely being.” And if this scheme is not openly espoused by any of the various sects of christians, in the present age ; yet it seems to be the secret spirit and soul of all the false schemes of religion now in vogue. But all these schemes are, in fact, no better than infidelity. For if *Jesus of Nazareth*, did not heartily love the character of the God of Israel, as exhibited in his law, he did not come from the God of Israel, he was not the promised Messiah, he was an imposter. For, on this hypothesis, he was no friend to the God of Israel ; but plainly on the side of his enemies, his rebellious subjects. And his mediation, in this view, was an affront to the deity, an infinite reflection on his character ; and so can be of no avail to his followers. And what is all this better than infidelity ? but if *Jesus of Nazareth*, did heartily love the character of the God of Israel as exhibited in his law, and died to assert this character to be good, and do it honour ; then no man can be his disciple, but those who love that character too. To hate that character, is to be an enemy to the cross of Christ.---*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

WHEN Christ was upon earth, the Pharisees, the most religious sect of people then in the world, joined very unanimously to hate his character, pretending at the same time great love to the God of Israel. But our Saviour and his apostles insisted upon it, that if they really loved God, they would love him ; and if they hated him, it was a full proof they hated God : because both their characters were alike ; John viii. 19, 29---48. Chap. xv. 21---24. Chap. xvi. 1, 2, 3. 1 John ii. 22, 23. But the Pharisees had quite lost the true meaning of the law of Moses ; so that with the greatest truth it might be said, that *they did not believe* Moses's writings. Joh. v. 47. and consequently had lost a right idea of the true God

God as exhibited in his writings. Mean while they had formed a new scheme of religion in their fancy, and got themselves to believe it to be the same that was taught by Moses, a scheme which justified such characters as theirs; and as was their scheme of religion, such was their notion of God. And having thus made themselves a God of a character to suit their own hearts; this God they loved, but they hated Christ, who was the express image of the true God. A full proof they hated the true God himself.---Even so now also it is in this present age. Christ has been gone to Heaven a long time, and the true sense of his gospel has been in a manner totally lost by many, who have professed a great regard to his name. And new Christs, and new gospels, have been invented, more agreeable to the taste of an apostate world; but of a character essentially different from the God of Israel. And so it is come to pass, that men are prepared to distinguish between the character of God as exhibited in the law, and the character of God as exhibited in the gospel; and hate one, and love the other; as characters essentially different; nay, even contrary the one to the other; not knowing, that it was the very design of the mediatorial office and work of Christ, to assert his father's character, as exhibited in the law, to be an absolutely perfect character, without spot or blemish; although it is expressly affirmed that he was *set forth to be a propitiation* for this very end, *to declare his father's righteousness*: or in the language of the prophet, *to magnify the law, and make it honourable*.

I PRAY that it may be considered, that if vindictive justice is essential to the divine character, and if it is in its own nature a bad thing, an unamiable property, that this one blemish will spoil God's whole character: and it will be impossible for any holy being in the universe to love him. None can love him but stupid, selfish creatures, who believe that he loves them, and who care not what becomes of others. For, if it must have rendered God's character hateful to have punished me according to his law; it must for the same reason, render it hateful, to punish any other according to his law. So that, on this hypothesis, if I am saved; yet God's

character must appear odious in my eyes to all eternity, unless he saves all others. So I shall hate God's character in heaven, while I view the torments of the damned. And all the love I shall have to him, will be simply from a selfish, narrow principle; because he has elected, and loved, and saved me. For I can see no beauty in his character. For in fact there is none, if vindictive justice be a bad and an unamiable property. For one bad property entirely approved of and constantly exercised will render any character entirely devoid of moral beauty.---Therefore

THE rapturous joys of sinners, who are blind to the beauty of the divine character as exhibited in his law, arising merely from a belief that God loves them and will save them, have nothing of the nature of holiness or love to God in them; nor will this kind of religion, although raised to the highest perfection, in the least qualify a man to live in heaven. To view things as they do there, would kill this kind of religion in a moment. A sight of the state of the damned would put an end to all their good thoughts of God, in the twinkling of an eye. And while heaven, ravished with the beauty of the divine conduct, resounds with *Hallelujahs*, they would begin to cry, "No, no, he is a tyrant! see, yonder is my neighbour, my brother, my child in torments!" And away they would flee, to their proper company, side with them, and join in their blasphemies. Unless we suppose this sort of converts, should they come to heaven, so entirely destitute of any thing like benevolence, as to feel perfectly easy at the misery of others, merely because they do not care for any but themselves.

IF vindictive justice were not glorious, it would be impossible, that the son of God incarnate should make such a glorious appearance, as he will at the day of judgment. He would rather be dressed in sackcloth. Impossible, that he who wept over Jerusalem, should now, without the least reluctance, pronounce the final sentence on the wicked. And impossible, that this sentence should be succeeded with unmixed, endless joys, among angels and saints, Beings perfect in benevolence, and the most generous goodness.

BUT

BUT neither Christ, nor angels, nor saints, will, at that day, look on the controversy, which has subsisted between God and his rebellious subjects, as it is generally looked upon now among mankind. God's infinite worthiness of supreme love and honour, and universal obedience, and the infinite evil of sin, will then be seen; and the wisdom, holiness, justice and goodness of all God's ways will be brought to light; and the unreasonable disaffection, and inexcusable obstinacy of an apostate race will appear in their true colours. The whole history of mankind will be opened, and all the opposition made to the truth, from the blood of Abel, to the blood of Christ, nay, to the blood of the last martyr, will be brought into the account, with all the despisings of the divine authority, threatenings, warnings, calls, &c. So that all holy beings will be fully and perfectly satisfied nay, perfectly pleased with the last sentence on the wicked. And it will be so far from lessening their happiness that it will give them new additional joys. And they will all join in saying, *Amen Hallelujah; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; and true and righteous are his judgments. And again they will say, Hallelujah: while the smoke of their torments ascends for ever and ever.* And all this in perfect consistence with the purest benevolence. Yea, all this will be the native result of benevolence, of love to God, and to the general good of the universe; as the wicked will be viewed, as enemies to Being in general, to God, to the universe, and to all good.

S E C T I O N VII.

God, who is the supreme, all-sufficient good, can consistently with his honour, and is willing to become a God and Father and everlasting portion, to all who return to him through Jesus Christ.

THAT God is an absolutely perfect, and so an infinitely glorious and amiable Being, is the first article of faith, in the creed of every true christian. And the second, which in point of importance, is like unto it, is, that Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God. On these two articles hang all the law and the gospel, all the doctrines of natural and revealed religion. As it is written, Joh. xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* A variety of consequences from these two fundamental truths have been already pointed out; and we now go on to add,

I. IF God is an absolutely perfect, an infinitely amiable and glorious Being, of necessity he must be the supreme, all sufficient good.---And

II. IF Jesus of Nazareth is his son, it is equally certain, that he can consistent with his honor, and is willing to become a God and father and everlasting portion, to all who return to him through Jesus Christ.

I. IF God is an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable Being, of necessity he must be the supreme, all-sufficient good. He must be the supreme good; for it implies a contradiction to say, that any thing can be better than the best. And God cannot be better than he is. Absolute perfection cannot be more perfect than it is. Infinite wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, armed with almighty power, constitutes a character absolutely perfect: a beauty without a blemish, a beauty infinitely bright. In the knowledge,

ledge, love and enjoyment of such a Being, therefore must consist the greatest possible happiness.

AND at the same time, the absolute perfection of the divine nature, renders the deity infinitely amiable and delightful in himself; the whole universe exists by him, is entirely in his hands, and under his government, and at his controul. In him all *live and move and have their Being. The earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. And his throne is established in the Heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. His Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.* So that he is the fountain and source of all Being, possessed of authority absolutely supreme, the sum and source of all good, and therefore in the highest sense absolutely all-sufficient. To have God for our God, is infinitely better than to be ourselves set up at the head, and made lords of the whole universe.

THERE are things of an earthly nature which are good in their places, as health, food, raiment, friends, &c. which we receive from God, the original Lord of all things; and for which therefore we ought to be thankful to him, and improve to his glory. But they are not fit to be the portion of our souls. And if we set our heart upon them as our supreme good, we are guilty of idolatry. And if we set them up for our God, and bow down our souls to them, we act as stupid and sinful a part as those, who, of old, bowed down to idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold. And when we come to die, they will prove as insufficient for our happiness, as the gods of the heathen did for their's. Nay, the society of angels and saints in heaven, leave God out of the account, would by no means afford that refined and sublime, that complete and stable happiness we need to give us full and perfect satisfaction; much less will the society of saints on earth. Nay, leave God out of the account, and angels and saints, and the whole universe, would sink into nothing in a moment. So that God is not only the supreme all-sufficient good; but strictly speaking, the sum total of all good. Psal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee; and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.*—Therefore

To love, honour and obey the deity, as the divine law requires, is as much our privilege, as it is our duty.

duty. And nothing but our criminal blindness to the absolute perfection, to the infinite glory and amiableness of the divine nature, prevents its appearing so to our souls.

SUPPOSE a father of an unblemished character, of consummate wisdom, the owner of a large estate, at the head of a numerous family, for the children to love his character, respect his person, to put an implicit trust in the wisdom of his conduct relative to family affairs, to rejoice in his supremacy, power and authority over his household, and that all the estate is in his hands, and all his family dependent on him, and in their temper and behaviour to be all dependence, subjection and obedience, is as much their privilege, as it is their duty. And nothing but a criminal state of mind can prevent its appearing so in their eyes.---To be disaffected to such a father's character, to be discontented under his government, to rise in rebellion, to go and leave his house, is as imprudent and foolish, as it is undutiful and wicked. And must appear so to the prodigal child, as soon as ever he comes to himself. And now to repent and return and become a dutiful child, must appear not only the fittest, but the happiest thing in the world. And to have such a man, with such an estate in his hands, for a father, is better for a child, than to have all the estate put into his own hands, and to be rendered supreme and independent.---So for us sinners to repent and be converted, to return to God through Jesus Christ, and to have him for our God and father, is better, yea *infinitely better than to have all the universe put into our own hands*. And to love his character, delight in his exaltation, rejoice in his supremacy and independency, and in the infinite wisdom and absolute perfection of his universal government, and to be full of holy fear and reverence, submissive, resigned, obedient, as dutiful children, is not only an honour due to God from us, *but also our highest privilege and happiness. It is Heaven on earth*. It is even the beginning of eternal life in the soul. And nothing but criminal blindness can prevent its appearing so to us. *Psal. lxxvii. 22. So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.*

I WILL be their God, as it is in its own nature the greatest

greatest possible good ; so it is the grand blessing of the gospel, in which all the rest finally terminate. *Heb. iv. 10. Rev. xxi. 7.* regeneration, repentance towards God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification considered under the notion of gospel privileges and blessings, all summarily consist, in our being delivered from an everlasting separation, in temper and state, from the deity, with its consequences ; and brought to an everlasting enjoyment of God, as our father, friend and portion. By the fall we lost God, we lost his image and favour, we lost a heart to love him, and a right to enjoy him ; we became disaffected to him, and we forsook him, and were doomed to depart, to be for ever given up to the power of sin, and to be monuments of the divine wrath for ever. In regeneration, repentance, faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification, we are recovered to the image and favour of God, to a heart to love him, and a right to enjoy him, and to the actual love and enjoyment of him as our God, our supreme good, our father, friend and portion. *Everlasting or eternal life*, is the phrase most commonly used to express summarily all the blessings of the gospel, in contrast with *eternal death* the wages of the first, the wages of every sin. *Job. iii. 15, 16, 36. Chap. iv. 14. Chap. v. 27. Chap. vi. 40, 47. Rom. vi. 23, &c.* And our Saviour tells us wherein *eternal life* consists. *Job xviii. 3. This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* God the father, who is eminently father and Lord of heaven and earth (not exclusive of the son and spirit) is considered, as the sum and fountain of all perfection and of all good. *Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.* Christ is considered, as the way to the father, the only way in which sinners can come to the enjoyment of him. *John xiv. 6. I am the way, no man cometh to the father but by me.* And the holy spirit is considered, as the person by whom we are quickened, raised from the dead, and brought to God through Jesus Christ. *Eph. ii. 18. Through Christ we have access by the spirit to the father.* And when the work of redemption is completely finished, and

all the redeemed brought to heaven, *God will be all in all* through eternal ages. 1 Cor. xv. 28.—Therefore, *I will be their God*, is the grand blessing of the gospel, in which all the rest finally terminate. This therefore, is in an eminent manner that *treasure in a field*, Matt. xiii. 44. that *pearl of great price*, ver. 46. for which every divinely enlightened soul, willingly and joyfully *sells all things*. God himself to be loved and enjoyed through Jesus Christ, is the royal feast shadowed and represented by the marriage *a king made for his son*, which was so slighted and despised by those who were called and kindly and earnestly invited to come. Mat. xxii. And this is that *bread to be eat in the kingdom of heaven*, that *great supper*, from coming to which, *they all with one consent desired to be excused*. Luke xiv. This is that *recompence of reward*, the everlasting enjoyment of God, which Moses had in view through all his trials, *for he endured as seeing him who is invisible*. Heb. xi. 26, 27.—

And by the way, this is the true reason, that the *great feast* (Mat. xxii.) was slighted, and the *great supper* (Luke xiv.) despised by the Jews, who all reckoned of going to heaven, as much as other carnal people do. Even, this is the true reason, that the happiness, proposed in the gospel, is as much disrelished by carnal hearts, as the holiness, which is there urged. For the happiness is a holy happiness, a kind of happiness which an unholy heart entirely disrelishes. Therefore, *they made light of it, and went their ways*. They looked upon it as a burden, and *desired to be excused*.—For in strict truth, there is no such heaven as carnal hearts imagine, when ravished to think their sins are pardoned, and heaven their own. Their God, their Christ, their heaven, are all the fruit of their own imaginations, and Satan's delusions. For the heaven of the gospel carnal men would not have, if they might. Yea, they perfectly disrelish it, they absolutely reject it, they obstinately refuse it, and many will sooner kill the messengers who invite them, than come to the feast. Thus our Saviour states the case. Mat. xxii. 6.—But to return.

If the absolute perfection, the infinite glory and amiableness of the supreme governor and Lord of the universe,

verse, renders him the supreme and all-sufficient good ; then, as soon as our eyes are opened to see his absolute perfection, his ineffable glory and beauty, he will begin to appear such to our souls. For now we begin to see things as they be. For this is what is meant by our eyes being opened. And if God does appear such to our souls ; to quit all idols, to return to him, to love him, to live to him, to be for him, to have him for our God and father and portion in time and to eternity, will be esteemed the highest possible priviledge, if we may.---But,

THE same absolute perfection and infinite glory and beauty of the divine nature, which renders God the supreme good, renders him infinitely *worthy* of supreme love and delight, and our disaffection infinitely criminal, and us infinitely ill-deserving : so that it would be even a glorious act in God to banish us for ever from his presence. Nor according to his holy law, that perfect rule of right, is any thing else to be expected. Nor in this view is there any hope in our case. Yea, it does not appear how he can consistent with his honour do any less than cast off for ever, creatures so infinitely vile.---But

II. IF Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God, it is certain beyond all dispute, that the holy and righteous governor of the world can consistently with his honour, and is willing to become a God and father and everlasting portion to any, the vilest and the worst, that shall return to him through Jesus Christ.---

For,

IF the absolutely perfect Being has given his own son, of equal glory with himself, to be incarnate, to obey and die in the room of sinners, to magnify his law and make it honourable, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus ; and if he has finished the work appointed him to do ; and if in testimony of his father's acceptance and full satisfaction, he hath raised him from the dead, yea, set him at his own right hand in heaven, where he appears in the character of a great high Priest, with his own blood, and ever liveth to make intercession ; in consequence of which by the decree of

heaven, repentance and remission of sins, are ordered to be preached to all nations in his name, and whosoever will may come, however vile and ill-deserving; yea, all are invited to come, and prayed and beseeched to be reconciled to God, who is represented as ready to receive the returning sinner, as the father was to receive his returning prodigal.—if all this is true,—and all this is true if Jesus is the Messiah;—then beyond all doubt, God can consistently with his honour, and is willing to receive to favour, and to become a God and father to all, whoever they be, that shall return to him through Jesus Christ.—Wherefore

As it appears to the enlightened soul the fittest and happiest thing imaginable, to return to the God of glory, as his rightful Lord and supreme good, to live to him and upon him, if he may; and as in this view of things, he is assured that liberty is granted to any, the vilest and the worst, to return through Jesus Christ; so now, with the prodigal son in *Luke xv.* he does return, and find acceptance. And thus the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ begins eternal life in the soul, agreeable to our Saviour's words in *John xvii. 3.* *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

AND from these truths thus briefly stated, we may see——how great the good offered in the gospel is——how free it is offered——the sin and madness of rejecting it——the absurdity of believing we have a title to heaven, when the very heaven offered is rejected with abhorrence.

I. THE good offered in the gospel is of infinite worth and value. Yea, it is the sum and substance of all good in the universe. For even God himself offers to be our God and father and portion. This was originally man's supreme good in paradise. This was forfeited by our apostacy. The second *Adam*, our near kinsman, has redeemed the inheritance, and opened a way for us to come to a lawful possession. The curse of the law doomed us to an everlasting separation from God, but the blood of Christ has opened a way for us to come to the everlasting enjoyment of him.

IN heaven they enjoy God as the supreme good;
they

they are ravished with the glories of his nature, charmed with the beauties of his character, exquisitely delighted in his exaltation, in his supremacy, in his universal perfect government, crying, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory ; and they are as flames of fire, all love, life, activity, in the delightful service of their glorious king. Even so here on earth, we, who have been outcasts, are invited to return, come home, and be reconciled to the God of glory, the God that made us, and view his nature and all his conduct as they do, become of the same temper, and members of the same family, and join in like holy employments and pleasures. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven.*— There is a great High Priest entered into heaven with his own blood ; and in his name, we, who deserved to be numbered with the damned, are invited to come with boldness in within the veil, and to begin our heaven on earth.—— To this feast we are invited to come and we may eat and drink as much as we please. We have full and free liberty to have access to the fountain of all good, the God of glory, the supreme Lord of the universe, to view the beauty of his character, to be charmed with the glories of his nature, to rejoice that he is God over all blessed for ever, that he reigns and will for ever reign, that his government is universal and absolutely perfect ; and through Jesus Christ, we may come and put our trust under the shadow of his wings, and in his name look up to him for all things, and love and cleave to him and delight in him with all our hearts ; and devote our whole lives to his service, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ; pressing toward the mark for the prize (the everlasting enjoyment of God) of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ ; and the end will be eternal life.

And

II. ALL this is offered freely, without money, and without price, to us infinitely unworthy and ill-deserving, through Jesus Christ. *Come, for all things are*

*ready.** Yea, it is urged upon us, we are prayed and beseeched to be thus reconciled to God; and by every motive from duty and interest, from God and Christ, from heaven and hell, we are pressed, we are compelled
we

* If we are invited to a feast by a neighbour, the invitation gives us a good right to go. And if God invites us to repent, return and be reconciled to him, the God of glory, the supreme good, through Jesus Christ, and enjoy him as the portion of our souls, the heavenly feast, it gives us good right to do so. Even as good a right as the Israelites had to take and eat the manna which lay around their tents. Of this there can be no dispute. But all these invitations give us no right nor warrant to believe that our sins are pardoned and God reconciled to us, while impenitent, while we refuse to come to the feast to which we are invited, and even despise and hate it.—Had God expressly declared, “if you will believe your sins are forgiven, they shall be forgiven. Here I offer you pardon as your own, impenitent as you are, only believe I thus offer it, and that this offer makes it yours, so as that you may with a good warrant believe it is your own, and enjoy the comfort of it as such; and according to your faith, so shall it be to you. I pray you, I beseech you, believe and take it home to yourself, impenitent as you are, and you never shall be disappointed.” Had God thus declared, it had been another case; but *there is not one tittle in the bible that looks that way, yea, instead of this, God has expressly declared, except ye repent, ye shall all perish.* Therefore, *repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*

And this may help the weakest Christian to see through the mist, that Mr. Cudworth, raises, p. 250.—Note, the grand objections against their notions of faith, Mr. Cudworth, has done nothing to remove. Yea, he has not *had courage to look them fairly in the face.*—According to their scheme (1.) “I, a sinner out of Christ, am condemned by the law, and under the wrath of God,” agreeable to John iii. 18, 36.—And this is the very truth. And in the view of this truth, they say, “I am necessarily full of hatred and heart-risings against God.” So that (2.) It is “utterly impossible” that I should ever love God untill I first of all know that “God is reconciled to me, loves me and will save me.”—And yet they say (3.) That I, a sinner out of Christ, have no evidence “from scripture, sense or reason, that God is reconciled to me, loves me, and will save me, nay, so far from it, that in fact I am condemned, and the wrath of God abideth on
“ me.

we are in a manner forced to come in. Having not only verbal declarations, that *whosoever will may come*; but the highest possible evidences from facts, that God can consistently with his honour, and is willing to receive those who do come. The gift, the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of his son is more than words, than promises, than oaths, to demonstrate that God is sincere and in earnest.—So that, there is on God's side no bar, no difficulty in the way, all things are ready, and we may come to the feast and welcome.

“*me.*”—However they affirm (4.) That, “I, a sinner out of Christ, just as I am, am firmly to believe that God is reconciled to me, loves me, and will save me.”—And (5.) “God stands bound by his promise, that I shall never be disappointed.”—This is their scheme fairly stated—Against which, among other things, I object (1.) That their faith is presumption. A believing without evidence. There being no evidence that “God is reconciled to me, a sinner out of Christ.”—(2.) Their faith is down right delusion. Believing a lie, viz. That God is reconciled to me, a sinner out of Christ, loves me, and will save me.” While in truth, every sinner out of Christ is condemned now, and will, dying as he is be damned hereafter. (3.) God has no where in the bible given the least hint, that if “sinners out of Christ do firmly believe, that God is reconciled to them, loves them and will save them, it shall be unto them according to their faith: They shall never be disappointed.” There is not one text of scripture that looks that way, but multitudes expressly to the contrary.—Thus stands the case.—Now men may dodge and sculk, and hide and raise a dust, and sling and cant, and call bad names: but by cool and fair reasoning they never can get over these difficulties. And it is plain they feel they cannot. Let any one read my letters and dialogues, and Mr. Cudworth's answer, and judge for himself.—According to their scheme, I must believe that God is reconciled to me, loves me, and will save me; because otherwise it is utterly impossible to love him. And I must believe this, while in the height of my enmity, because it is this belief which begets my first love. This belief then takes place in the heart, while dead in sin, and full of enmity to God. It is the act of an unregenerate, carnal heart. And it makes a carnal heart feel well; and no wonder it does. And these good feelings are supposed to be the Christian graces; when in fact, they are the good feelings of a carnal heart, comforted by the belief of a lie.

—In the universe there is nothing of the nature of an hindrance or impediment, which can prevent our coming, are we ourselves but inclined to come.——

But

III. If through mere disinclination to the Deity, to the God that all heaven loves, the God of glory, we make light of the feast, and go our ways, turn our backs upon God, refuse to return and be reconciled, even after a way has been opened for it by the blood of his own son, and after such methods have been used to persuade us; it will be the most aggravated kind of wickedness in the universe, and a degree of folly and madness not to be paralleled in any part of God's empire.— And to persist in our disaffection to the divine character from year to year, and to refuse to be reconciled to our dying hour, must render us worthy of such a punishment, and prepare us for such self-condemnation, inward remorse and anguish of heart, as no tongue can express. Then will be accomplished on impenitent sinners the words which are written in *Prov. i. 24,—31. Because I have called, and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh, &c.* And all holy beings in the universe, convinced of the justice and wisdom of the divine conduct, will join to cry, *Amen, Hallelujah. While the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever.*

IV. How great is the absurdity of men's believing they have by the gospel a title to heaven, when they reject the very heaven offered in the gospel with abhorrence! the heaven offered is the everlasting enjoyment of God through Jesus Christ. Every one at enmity against God's real character, as exhibited in the law, and declared to be absolutely perfect on the cross of Christ, rejects this heaven with abhorrence! this feast is no feast to him. He is so far from a relish to those heavenly dainties, that his soul loaths this food. To say, that men may come to God by Christ, and find rest and satisfaction in him, while at the same time they are enemies to his real character, is as absurd, as to say, men may come to a feast and eat with pleasure, when they

they perfectly disrelish every thing set before them. It is true, one who is an enemy to the divine character, may be ravished in a belief his sins are pardoned. And this he may call a feast. And this belief he may call eating : and with this eating he may be satisfied, so as to live contentedly without God in the world. Yea, his contentment and comfort supposes him to be ignorant of the real character of the true God. But it is absurd to suppose one should choose the true God for his supreme good through Jesus Christ, while at enmity against his real character. For men will not choose that for the object of their delight, which in their hearts they do not like. Nor will men desire a mediator to bring them to the enjoyment of that, which they have no appetite for, and which they do not desire to enjoy. While men are enemies to the divine character, they have no inclination to come to him through Christ, rather their aversion to come, is equal to their enmity to his character. Yea, that God should actually become the supreme good and satisfying portion of a sinner, who is of such a taste, as that God's real character can give him no delight or satisfaction, but the contrary, is a plain contradiction. We must love an object, or we cannot enjoy it. We must be suited, pleased, enamoured with the divine character, or we cannot enjoy the deity. On this account therefore it is absolutely necessary, we become new creatures. For *except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* A sinner could not enjoy heaven, were he admitted and allowed to live there for ever.—

Besides,

ALTHOUGH God can consistently with his honour pardon and receive to favour the sinner, who returns to him through Jesus Christ, and stands ready to do it ; yet it is equally true, that he cannot, consistently with his honour, pardon and receive to favour, a sinner, who refuses to return, while going on obstinate in his rebellion ; nor is he at all willing to do it. Christ did not die, that impenitent sinner, while such, might be forgiven, and received into the divine favour. God can no more pardon an impenitent sinner, consistently with his honour, than if Christ had never died. The decree
of

of heaven is fixed, and cannot, and never will be revoked, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* But as this point is of great importance, and is generally denied by *Antinomians*; so it shall be taken into more particular consideration.

SECTION

S E C T I O N VIII.

Repentance is before Forgiveness.

IF GOD is an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and of universal obedience; and if our disaffection to the divine character and rebellion against God, is altogether inexcusable and infinitely criminal agreeable to the voice of the divine law, and to the import of the cross of Christ; if God the great governor of the universe views things in this light, and in this view calls unto us from heaven to confess our sins, repent and turn unto him with all our hearts; if these things are so, and they are so, if the Bible is the word of God; then the meaning of his words is certain, the ideas designed to be conveyed by them are determinate.—To repent, beyond dispute, is to change our minds as to the divine character, to lay aside our prejudices, to open our eyes and begin to look upon God as he is, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and of universal obedience, and in the light of his glory to begin to view our disaffection and rebellion as altogether inexcusable and infinitely criminal, and in this view cordially to take all that blame to ourselves which God lays upon us, and to be affected accordingly: saying, “righteous art thou, O Lord, when thou speakest, “and clear when thou judgest. Should justice take “place, no iniquity could be imputed unto thee. It “would not be a blemish, but a beauty in thy character, and all heaven ought for ever to love and adore “thy glorious Majesty, should I receive my just desert “and perish for ever. But thou canst have mercy on “whom thou wilt, through Jesus Christ. To thine infinite grace and self-moving goodness, through him I “look.

"look,---*God be merciful to me a sinner.*"---Repentance stands then in opposition to all our former prejudices against the divine character; and in opposition to that sin extenuating, self-justifying, law-hating, God blaming disposition which reigns in every impenitent soul. God is seen in his beauty, the divine law as a ministration of condemnation and death, appears glorious, our disaffection and rebellion infinitely criminal: we justify God, approve his law, condemn ourselves, accept the punishment of our iniquity, as worthy of God; and thus we confess, repent and turn unto the Lord, looking only to free grace through Jesus Christ for pardon.

A MAN may think himself to blame for Sabbath-breaking, lying, cheating, drunkenness, &c. who never thought himself to blame for being disaffected to the divine character. Also a man may think himself to blame for not believing that Christ died for him in particular, that God loves him, that his sins are pardoned, or for his being unaffected in this belief, who never thought himself to blame for not loving God as an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable Being. Some may be sorry wherein they think themselves to blame through fear of punishment, as was the case with *Judas*: others, who believe their sins are pardoned, may from a principle of natural gratitude, be sorry wherein they think themselves to blame, as was the case with *Saul*, when *David* spared his life. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16---19. *Saul lift up his voice and wept, &c. Chap. xxvi. 21. Then said Saul, I have sinned.--- I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.* But he who is ignorant of the beauty of God's true character, is blind to the chief thing wherein his blame lies. And while men do not see their blame, they will see no occasion to repent. And should any charge sin home upon them in such a case, they would justify themselves in their hearts.

THE divine law, which requires us to love God, the absolutely perfect, the infinitely glorious and amiable Being, with all our hearts, and yield a perfect obedience to his will on the pain of eternal damnation, is holy, just and good; our blindness to his beauty is wholly

wholly criminal, our sin extenuating, self justifying pleas are of no weight, all our objections against the divine character and law, are only the language of enmity against the glorious monarch of the universe, we are entirely without excuse and infinitely to blame.---These all are facts.---And thus God viewed our case when he gave his son to die, and thus he views our case when he calls us to confess our sins, repent and turn unto the Lord; and in this light therefore must we view our case, if ever we become truly penitent. Every sin-extenuating, self-justifying plea; every objection against the divine character and law; is a declaration that we are so far from repentance, that as yet we do not think that it belongs to us to repent, in the sense we are called to in the gospel; in this case we do not *confess*, but *cover* our sins.

In true repentance our eyes begin to be opened to see things as in fact they are. God's character infinitely amiable, and our own infinitely odious; his law wholly right, and our ways as wrong and criminal as that supposes. And in this view we begin to take all the blame to ourselves.* True repentance is therefore in
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* *Question.* "How can a finite mind see an infinite object?"

Answer. Not by a full comprehension of it, only by a high sense and lively conviction that it is infinite. As thus, suppose, we could see with our eyes, a man, for the sake of one sinful pleasure, deliberately leap head-long down into a lake of fire and brimstone, which he and we knew would never be quenched, and out of which there could be no escape, and in which by God's almighty power, he would be for ever held up in existence, his sense of feeling quick and lively, we should pronounce the man guilty of infinite folly. We might see and know that his folly was in fact infinite, although we could by no means fully comprehend the thing. So in this sense, we are capable of seeing and knowing that God is infinitely lovely, and we infinitely odious and ill deserving, how far soever we be from a full adequate idea of infinity. We are capable of as great a sense of our infinite obligations to love God, as we be of the infinite dreadfulness of eternal misery. In legal conviction a sinner begins to have some lively sense of the infinite dreadfulness of eternal damnation; so in regeneration
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consequence of the regenerating influences of the holy spirit, and of a nature specifically different from any kind of sorrow for sin a man can experience who is at enmity against God.

SIN is the thing to be repented of : and sin is a transgression of the law. And the first and chief thing required in the law, is supreme love to God. And therefore want of supreme love to God, our disaffection to his character, and rebellion against him, is our great wickedness, which we have to repent of. But it will not be in our hearts to repent, unless we truly see our blame. We cannot truly see our blame, unless we see that which chiefly renders us to blame. But that which chiefly renders God worthy of love, is what chiefly renders us to blame for not loving God. And so it is the amiableness of the divine nature, which chiefly renders us to blame for the loving God. For it is the amiableness of the divine nature, which chiefly renders God worthy of love. It is a sense of this therefore, that discovers to us the great evil of sin, and shews us the reason we have to be sorry and repent ; and which therefore primarily lays the foundation of true repentance, and without which no repentance is true.—If I blame my neighbour for being groundlessly disaffected to my character, I shall not, I cannot look upon him as a true penitent, till beginning to look upon my character as I think he ought to, he begins to blame himself as I do. It is contrary to common sense, to suppose any other kind of

and repentance, we begin to have some lively apprehension of God's infinite amiableness, and our infinite odiousness.—Some say, “ we should leave all infinities out of our scheme of religion.—And so we might, if we were in no connection with infinities. To be consistent, these men should deny the infinite glory of God the father, the infinite evil of sin, the eternity of Hell torments, the divinity of Christ ; and then when thus our connection with infinities is at an end, the word, and all notion of the thing, may be excluded out of religion. But not till then. As soon as these men will prove, that God is not an infinitely amiable being, and that we are to die like the beasts, I will say nothing more about infinities. Till then I shall say, that the sinner, who by rebelling against God, runs head-long into eternal destruction, is guilty of infinite folly, as to his own soul, as well as of infinite wickedness toward his maker, the infinitely glorious governor of the universe.

repentance to be true and genuine.—And if any man abuses me, in name or estate, through disaffection to my person, no penitency for those abuses, can be esteemed genuine, so long as the disaffection from which they arose remains in full strength. I appeal to the universal sense of mankind, who, when it comes to their own case, are every one in this opinion. On this ground it was, that *David* put no confidence in *Saul*, notwithstanding all the tears and penitency, which his generosity extorted from him. He did not suppose, that that kind of repentance was any certain sign that he was a new man. Yea, he had rather venture himself with *Achish* king of Gath, a Philistine, a Pagan, than with him. 1 *Sam.* xxvi. and xxvii.

As want of love to God, together with disaffection to the divine character, has influence into that whole course of wickedness which mankind in general live in; so when they are in Scripture called upon to repent of particular sins and turn to God, their want of love to God and disaffection to the divine character, as manifested in those particular sins, is to be repented of, and a hearty reconciliation to the divine character is implied in the repentance they are called unto. Thus the frequent idolatries of the children of Israel, for which they are often called upon in the Old Testament to repent, were manifest instances of want of love to the God of *Abraham*, and proofs of their disaffection to his character. So the Jews hating and murdering the son of God, the express image of his father's person, for which they were on the day of Pentecost called upon to repent, was a manifest instance of their want of love to God and proof of their disaffection to his character. And there is no sin whatsoever that any man is guilty of, but what is an instance of disrespect to God, and disregard of his authority. Therefore it was said in the case of *David's* sin, that he *despised the Lord and despised the commandment of the Lord*. And therefore whenever any one is called upon to repent of any particular sin and turn to the Lord, it is to be understood in this view. He hath sinned against God, despised the Lord, and despised the commandment of the Lord, treated the God of glory, the great king of the universe with contempt. This is
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his crime, on this account he is chiefly and above all to blame. And that which renders him infinitely blame worthy, is that the God whom he has despised, is by nature God, an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable Being, infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and universal obedience. And so in this point of light is the true penitent to view his transgressions, and take blame to himself. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned.* Wherefore a sense of God's loveliness is the first and chief spring and source of true repentance, as this brings into view the great evil of sin. Even as the truth of the Gospel is the only foundation of hope in the true penitent's case. And thus the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, lays the foundation of all religion. *Job. xvii. 3.*—And let it be remembered, that the same Gospel which we believe was for substance revealed to *Adam*, and believed by all true penitents from the beginning of the world.—These things being premised—I proceed to prove,—

THAT repentance is before forgiveness.—And who-soever will be at the pains to look the Bible through, will find, that this is a doctrine taught by *Moses* and the prophets, by Christ and his apostles, nor is there any one point of revealed religion more plainly held forth.—Let us begin with *Moses*.

“AND now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good?—For the Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.—Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments alway.—That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, **THE LORD thy God.**” This is a specimen of their rule of duty. *Deut. x. 12, 13, 17. Chap. xi. 1. Chap. xxviii. 58.*

“AND it shall be on the day when you shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and
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plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law—very plainly. Half the tribes standing on Mount Gerizzim, and half the tribes on Mount Ebal—The Levites shall speak and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, “curfed, curfed, curfed, twelve times going, all summed up in, ‘curfed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them: and all the people shall say amen.” Which curse, according to St. *Paul*, comprized eternal damnation in it, even that eternal misery which Christ redeems his people from by his death. So that besides being curfed in his basket and his store, in the House and in the field, and in all his earthly enjoyments; he dying under the curse of the law and wrath of God, must be for ever miserable in a future state. So infinitely great was the evil of not loving and obeying the Lord their God. *Deut.* xxvii. *Gal.* iii. 10.—14.

In what way now was an Israelite to obtain pardon at the hands of the great God?—The case is plain—according to the Levitical law, once every year, on the great day of atonement, the High Priest, in behalf of all the congregation, was to take a goat for a sin-offering, kill it, and bring the blood within the veil, and sprinkle it upon and before the mercy-seat; for without shedding of blood there was no remission; for the law was holy, just, and good. And in token of repentance as what must precede forgiveness, he was to lay both his hands on the head of a live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, and thus put them upon the head of the goat, to be sent away into the wilderness. And all these iniquities thus by confession put upon the goat, he bore away into a land not inhabited. And it afterwards became a proverb among the Israelites, *he that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* *Lev.* xvi. 15, 22—*Prov.* xxvii. 13.—For as this was done on the great day of atonement for all the congregation; which day, by the way, was to be wholly, from evening to evening, spent in fasting and deep repentance; and whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted on that same day, so far from being pardoned, that he shall

shall be cut off from among his people. Lev. xxii. 26—

32. I say, as this was done on the great day of atonement relative to the iniquities of the congregation in general; so if any particular man at any time, committed a sin, he was to bring his bullock, and in token of confession and repentance, to lay his hands upon his head, and substitute it to die in his room; the plain import of all which was, “I have sinned, the law is holy, just and good: I deserve to die, and have no hope, but from the meer mercy of God through the atonement.” And now the bullock was slain, the blood sprinkled, the body burnt; sacrificed in the sinner’s stead, and so atonement was made, and his sin forgiven. *Lev. iv.*—But if he had not only sinned against the great God, walking contrary to him, but also in his sin injured his neighbour, he must first, as became a true penitent, make restitution to his neighbour, before the sacrifice of atonement was to be offered. *Lev. vi. 5. Mat. v. 23, 24.* And if, without repentance and restitution, like a hypocrite, he came before the Lord with his sacrifice, he would be so far from obtaining forgiveness, that it was a proverb in Israel, *the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.* And relative to all instances of offering sacrifice, still going on impenitent in their sins, God plainly declared his utmost abhorrence. *Isai. i. 10.—20.*

AND if a man is truly penitent, he has not only a heart, with the utmost freedom, to make restitution to those he has injured in name or estate; but also has an heart, with equal freedom, to forgive and love those who have injured him, although instead of penitency and restitution, they even continue to hate, to curse and to use him despitefully; therefore our blessed Saviour plainly teaches, that unless we love such our enemies, we cannot be the children of God; *Mat. v. 43—46.* And expressly declares, *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.* Cap. vi. 15. Which cuts off all impenitent sinners from pardon. For it is plain our Saviour means, such a kind of forgiving those that trespass against us, as is peculiar to true penitents. For he says, *v. 14. If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will forgive you.* And accord-

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cordingly he taught his disciples to pray, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, ver. 12. with an apparent design to seclude all unhumbled, impenitent sinners, who have no heart truly to forgive others, from any hope of forgiveness, while in their present state. See this farther confirmed from *Mat. xviii. 21.—35. Mark xi. 26.*—No persons in the world more bitter, spiteful, unforgiving, than some who firmly believe their sins past, present and to come, are all forgiven. If they love their own party, who love them; yet they are of a very unkind, unfriendly, bitter spirit towards their opponents.—Repentance humbles the heart, and makes men of a forgiving, benevolent, tender, friendly disposition: but when an impenitent sinner through the delusion of satan, becomes confident that he is a favourite of heaven, it naturally increases his pride. And from pride proceeds a contentious, bitter spirit.—But to return to the law of *Moses*.

God by the mouth of *Moses* told all the congregation of Israel, *Lev. xxvi.* that vengeance should pursue them so long as they continued impenitent in their sins. “If ye will not hearken unto me, &c. *ver. 14.* I will appoint over you terror, &c. *ver. 16.* and if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins, *ver. 18.* And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins, *ver. 21.* And if ye will not be reformed, &c. I will punish you yet seven times more for your sins, *ver. 23, 24.* And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury, *ver. 27, 28.* Ye shall perish among the heathen. *ver. 38.*—But if after all this, they should become truly penitent, then God would forgive them.—“If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespasss which they trespassed against me, and also that they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their ini-

“ iniquity : then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember ; and I will remember the land.” ver. 40, 41, 42.

SEE, to the same purpose. *Deut.* xxx. 1, 2, 3. “ And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, *and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, &c. with all thy heart, and with all thy soul ; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity and have compassion on thee, &c.*” compared with *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25—33. where God declares concerning the Jews in Babylon, that he will first bring them to repentance, and then restore them to their land. *In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the city, &c.* And in this view read *Daniel’s* confession and prayer, in the behalf of the captive Jews. *Dan.* ix. 1—19.

And as this was the true spirit of the Mosaic dispensation, that repentance is before forgiveness ; so *Solomon* in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, which was planned on that dispensation, and may serve to shew the true nature of it, expressly and repeatedly holds forth this doctrine, that repentance is before forgiveness. One cannot well see in how strong a light this point is set, without reading the whole prayer. *1 Kings* viii. The temple was a type of the son of God incarnate, God dwelt in it, as afterwards he did in the man Christ Jesus. *My NAME shall be there.* ver. 29. And so in all their prayers the penitent Jews looked toward the holy temple, and then God heard in heaven his dwelling place. “ When thy people Israel shall be smitten down before the enemy, because they sinned against thee, *and shall turn again unto thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house ; then hear thou in Heaven, and forgive, &c.* ver. 33, 34. When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they sinned against thee ; if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, *&c. then hear thou in heaven, and forgive, &c.* ver. 35, 36. If there be in the land famine, pestilence, &c. &c. whatsoever pla-

plague, whatsoever sickness there be ; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, *which shall know every man the plague of his own heart*, and spread forth his hands towards this house ; *then hear thou in heaven, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, (i. e. according as he appears to be penitent or not) whose heart thou knowest.* ver. 37, 38, 39. If they sin against thee, and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives, unto the land of the enemy, far or near ; yet if *they bethink themselves*, in the land whither they were carried captives, and *repent*, and make supplication unto thee, in the land of them that carried them captives, *saying, we have sinned, and done perversely, we have committed wickedness, and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul*, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee towards their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and the city which thou hast chosen, and *the house which I have built for thy name* ; then *hear thou in heaven, and forgive.* ver. 46, 47, 48, 49, 50.*

YEA, Solomon lays it down as a universal maxim. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper ; but whose confesseth*

* Some to evade the force of these plain texts, have pretended, " that the repentance insisted upon in *Lev. xxvi.* and " *1 Kings viii.* was merely an ungracious repentance, which " could intitle only to the removal of outward judgments, " but not to the favour of God and eternal life."—But they might as well say, that a gracious repentance was no where required, nor pardon and eternal life promised, from the beginning of *Genesis*, to the viiiith Chap of the *1 Kings*, and so exclude all who lived before that period from any hope of eternal salvation. For they may be challenged to find any texts more express than these.—The truth is that in the Jewish dispensation, which was altogether *shadowy*, the earthly Canaan was an emblem of the Heavenly, the temporal curses of the eternal curses, and their sacrifices of atonement, of the great sacrifice of Christ, and their temple, of the Son of God incarnate, and the penitent believer was not only exempted from outward and temporal, but from spiritual and eternal evils.—'Tis certain St. Paul, viewed the Jewish dispensation in this light, from *Gal. iii. 10.—29.* and from the epistle to the *Hebrews*, throughout.

and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Prov. xxviii. 13.—

And not even *David*, the man after God's own heart could be exempted, when he sinned; he must confess and repent, before he could be forgiven, and be followed with terror and anguish 'till he did. *Psal.* xxxii. 3, 4, 5.

“ When I kept silence, my bones waxed old; through
“ my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy
“ hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned
“ into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin
“ unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said,
“ I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and
“ thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.”—And

Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, who cries to every one that is a-thirst, to come without money, in the same place does as plainly teach, that repentance is before forgiveness. *Isai.* lv. 7. “ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”——

And,

JEREMIAH preaches the same doctrine, *Jer.* ii. 5.
“ Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? ver. 11. Hath a nation changed their Gods, which are yet no Gods? but my people hath changed their glory, for that which doth not profit. ver. 19. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. *Chap.* iii. 12. Go, and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you. *Chap.* iv. 1. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me. ver. 3, 4. Thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away
“ the

"the fore skins of your hearts, lest my fury come forth like fire."——And

EZEKIEL inspired by the same spirit, speaks the same language. *Chap.* xviii. 30, 31, 32. "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions: so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye. *Chap.* xxxiii. 11. That the wicked turn from his way, and live: turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel." All exactly agreeable to the language of Solomon's prayer, before cited. *1 Kings* viii. 46.——50.* To the same purpose see also, *Hos.* xvi. 1, 2, 3. *Joel* ii. 12——18.——But to pass on to the New Testament.——

John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for the holy, heavenly kingdom of the Messiah, into which no man could enter unless *born of water and of the spirit*, (*John* iii. 5.) preached in the wilderness of Judea, saying, *Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* As if he had said "Such is the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, so holy, so like to that kingdom

* To affirm, as two late writers (*Mr. Sandeman*, and after him *Mr. Cudworth*) do, that every true penitent may be forgiven absolutely without any atonement at all, is implicitly to affirm, that the Old and New Testaments are not from God; the chief design of both which being to teach, that *without shedding of blood, there can be no remission.* And to bring the xviiith and xxxiii^d of Ezekiel, to prove the point, is to suppose, that Ezekiel was not inspired by the same spirit which inspired the other sacred writers. Mere law promises life to nothing short of sinless perfection, and curses the man that fails in the least point. *Deut.* xxvii. 26. And there is no deliverance for true penitents from this curse, according to the gospel, but by the blood of Christ. *Gal.* iii. 10,—14. And therefore the captive Jews, when brought to repentance, were directed to look and pray towards the holy temple, and in this way hope for pardon. *1 Kings* viii. And to suppose that Ezekiel in Babylon, taught them to expect pardon in a way contrary to the dispensation they were under, is to suppose him a false prophet.—See Section V. of this Essay.

“which is in Heaven, that no impenitent sinner while such, can be a member of it, or share in its blessings. Therefore, repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand; the Messiah will soon make his appearance, repent and be prepared to receive him.” Thus he preached, and many of the children of Israel did he turn to the Lord their God, and so made ready a people prepared for the Lord Jesus. *Luke i. 16, 17.* For when the Messiah made his appearance, although many were filled with a temporary joy, yet not one received him as the Messiah, but those who were born of God, (*John i. 11, 12, 13.* *1 John v. 1.*—— This doctrine of repentance John preached to all the people, to the pharisees, to the sadducees, to the publicans, soldiers, &c. and whosoever came, confessing their sins, he admitted to baptism, as an external sign of the remission of sins. First they must repent, and then be baptized for the remission of sins. And thus John preached the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins; placing repentance before forgiveness, just as Moses and the prophets had done before him. *Mat. iii. 1*——*12.* *Mar. i. 5.* *Luke iii. 3.*
——*14.*——And

JESUS CHRIST taught the same doctrine. “Repent ye, and believe the gospel (*Mar. i. 15.*) I came to call sinners to repentance. (*Luke v. 32.*) There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth (*Luke xv. 7.*) I came to heal the broken hearted. (*Luke iv. 18*——*21.*) Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. (*Mat. v. 4.*) But except ye repent, ye shall all perish. (*Luke xiii. 3, 5.*” And this doctrine he exemplified at large in the parable of the prodigal son, who comes to himself, repents, and returns to his father, and so obtains forgiveness. (*Luke xv. 17*——*20.*)——Yea, now he is exalted in heaven to be a prince and a Saviour, he communicates these blessings in the same order, he gives repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. (*Act. v. 31.*) and he observed the same order in his commission to his apostles, to preach in his name repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, (*Luke xxiv. 48.*)——and accordingly

THE APOSTLES began, on the day of Pentecost,
being

being all filled with the holy Ghost, to preach at Jerur salem, in the same order. Acts ii. 38. *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins.** And as they began, so they went on. Act. iii. 19. *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* And when Paul was converted to christianity, and sent to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, it was, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins. Act. xxvi. 18. And accordingly he went forth and preached every where, that they should repent and turn to God, ver. 20. testifying both to the Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Chap. xx. 21. And as to those, who shut their eyes, stopped their ears, and hardened their hearts, and were given up to destruction, in the days of *Isaiah*, of Christ and of his apostles, their sentence runs thus, in which is clearly taught that according to God's established method of dispensing pardon, repentance is before forgiveness. "Lest they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them," *Isai. vi. 10. Mar. xiii. 15. Act. xxviii. 27.* For what is meant by their being healed is declared, in *Mar. iv. 12. and their sins should be forgiven them.*

So that this doctrine has been taught by *Moses* and the prophets, by Christ and his apostles; and if one should attempt to make a collection, there is doubtless as great

* As to Acts ii. 38. some object, "that the 3000 had a saving faith, and were justified by that conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, which pricked them to the heart, with a sense of their guilt, as being his murderers, before they did repent."—But if so, they had a right to baptism before they repented. For a saving faith gives right to baptism. *Acts. viii. 37.* But it is plain *Peter* calls upon them to repent first, before baptism; nor did he baptize any but those who appeared to receive his word gladly. That kind of faith therefore, which was before, and without repentance, as in *Peter's* judgment, it did not intitle to baptism; so neither to pardon and salvation: for it was an acknowledged point in the apostolic age, that, that faith which intitles to salvation, intitles to baptism.

a number of scripture texts, which represent repentance as necessary to pardon, as there is that represent faith as necessary thereto. And we may with as good a face, and with as much consistence with scripture language, affirm that we are forgiven before faith, as that we are forgiven before repentance. And it is plain, that the repentance spoken of through the scriptures, as being before forgiveness, is not an ungracious, unfavouring repentance; but a gracious, saving repentance; because pardon constantly connected with it.——To these proofs from scripture texts, may be added these scriptural arguments.——N. B. All, except the grossest sort of *Antinomians*, acknowledge that faith is before forgiveness; as the scriptures so expressly declare, that *he that believeth not is condemned, and the wrath of God abideth on him* John iii. 18, 36. If therefore it can be proved that repentance is essential to faith, it will follow that repentance is before forgiveness.

ARGUMENT I. To believe the gospel to be true with all the heart, is before forgiveness; but repentance is implied in believing the gospel to be true with all the heart: therefore repentance is before forgiveness.—That repentance is implied in believing the gospel to be true with all the heart, is evident.—For

THE import of the cross of Christ is, “that God is
 “an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and
 “amiable being, infinitely worthy of supreme love
 “and honour, and universal obedience; that the di-
 “vine law is holy, just, and good, a glorious law,
 “worthy to be magnified and made honourable; that
 “our disaffection to the divine character and rebellion
 “against God is infinitely criminal:” as hath been
 already proved, *Sect.* IV.—But with all our hearts to
 come into these sentiments, and cordially believe
 them to be true, is to begin to repent, in the scripture
 sense of the word. As hath been also already proved,
 in the beginning of this *Section.* and in *Sect.* III.—In-
 deed, to believe these truths by the dint of external
 evidence, against the grain of the heart, as the devil
 does, doth not imply repentance, nor will such a faith
 intitle to pardon.—But to believe them *with all the heart*,
 cordially to come into these sentiments, is what *St. Paul*
 means

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means by *repentance* toward God. *Acts* xx. 21.—And hence we may see the true meaning of our saviour's words, *repent, and believe the gospel*. For we cannot believe the gospel to be true with all the heart, without repentance.—And hence, that phrase of the apostle, *2 Tim.* ii. 25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if peradventure God will give them *repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*. *Heresy* is altogether of a criminal nature, a *work of the flesh*, and reckoned up along with *idolatry* and *murder*, *Gal.* v. 19, 20, 21. Impenitent sinners cordially love error, but they hate the truths of the gospel. Nor can they be brought to believe them with all the heart, unless God give them *repentance*.—And therefore repentance is implied in faith, and so is before forgiveness.

ARG. II. To look to the free grace of God, in the name of Christ, for pardon, is essential to that faith in Christ's blood, which is before forgiveness; but repentance is implied in thus looking to God for pardon in the name of Christ: therefore repentance is before forgiveness.

ALL after acts of faith, with respect to the pardon of sins committed after conversion, are of the same nature with the first act of faith; as is evident, from *Paul's* bringing the example of *David* to explain and prove his point, whose sin and repentance were long after his conversion. Compare *Rom.* iv. 6, 7, 8. with *Psal.* xxxii.—But saints are directed to look to God for the pardon of daily transgressions. *Mat.* vi. 12. *Forgive us our debts*. And in *John* xvi. 23. Christ has taught his disciples to look to God *in his name* for all things; and so for pardon, among the rest. So David prays for pardon. *Psal.* li. and so every penitent Israelite was directed to pray for pardon, looking towards the holy temple. *1 King.* viii. which was a type of Christ.

BUT to look to God for pardon in the name of Christ implies repentance. Cordially to ask for the pardon which the gospel offers, is cordially to acknowledge we need that pardon; which is cordially to own that we are to blame as the gospel supposes, which is to begin to repent,—and to ask *in the name of Christ*, is to acknowledge, that we are not fit to be pardoned, consider-

ed as in ourselves, we are too bad ; yea, are so bad, that justice calls for our destruction, nor can God consistently with his honour forgive us but through the blood of his own son. Which supposes, that we have a true sense of the great evil of sin, in which repentance radically consists.

WE cannot from the heart look to God for pardon in the name of Christ, only as we in our hearts feel that we are to blame, and deserve to be punished according to the true import of law and gospel. But cordially to come into this view of ourselves, so as from the heart to say with the publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, is true repentance. *Luk. xviii. 14.* 'Tis the character of an impenitent sinner to hide and *cover* his sins ; but he that *confesseth and forsaketh* them shall have mercy. So far as one is cordial in his confession, so far he does actually give up his sins, and begins to forsake them. No impenitent sinner from the heart will own himself to blame in the sense in which he is charged by God in his law, nor in the sense the gospel supposes, when it calls him to repent and offers pardon. And while one will not cordially own himself to blame as he is charged, nor own he needs the pardon which is offered, he cannot from the heart look to God for it, much less look in the name of Christ. To say otherwise, evidently implies a contradiction—Compare, *1 Kings viii. 46—50.* with *Acts xx. 21.*

THUS from express scripture texts, and from these scriptural arguments, the point stands proved, that repentance is before forgiveness. Some objections have been already obviated ; the rest we will now proceed to state and answer.

OBJECT. 1. " WE read of some, who are represented as exercising repentance in a sense their sins are already forgiven. *Ezek. xvi. 63. Luke vii. 36—48.*

ANSW.—Very true. And no doubt it is thus with all true converts. Their repentance, instead of ceasing, is always encreased by a sense of divine forgiveness. Compare *Lev. xxvi. 40, 41.* with *Ezek. xvi. 63.* But where do we read of any whose sins are forgiven while they continue impenitent, enemies to God, and obstinate

ate in their rebellion?—No where.—Rather this is the united voice of all divine revelation, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish:* And therefore *repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*

OBJECT. 2.—“ If *Act* iii. 19. will prove repentance and conversion to be before forgiveness, it will equally prove, that none are forgiven till the day of judgment, which is the *time of refreshing* there referred to.”

ANSW.—Whatsoever intitles a man to pardon according to the gospel in this present time, will intitle him to pardon when christ shall come to judge the world at the last day. For he will judge the world then according to the gospel. Therefore those who repent and are converted now, exclusive of all impenitent, unconverted sinners, shall be publicly owned by Christ at that time. But if the gospel pardons impenitent sinners now, Christ must accept them then, for he must judge the world according to the gospel. And he, who hath a title to heaven according to the gospel, must be admitted then. And therefore if impenitent sinners have a title to heaven according to the gospel, into heaven they will go. For the Judge will in honour to himself be obliged to admit all who have a title according to his own gospel.—And therefore if the *Antinomian* sense of this text is true, *Peter* had no occasion to say, *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come.* Rather he ought to have said, “ believe that your sins are blotted out, impenitent and unconverted as you are, and it shall be unto you according to your faith, when the time of refreshing shall come : for God stands bound by his promise, that you shall not be disappointed.”

OBJECT. III. “ A true penitent is a good man, and may therefore be justified on the foot of his own goodness, and therefore need not *believe on him that justifieth the ungodly.* *Rom.* iv. 5.”

ANSW. No impenitent sinner will cordially own himself *ungodly* in the sense charged upon him by his judge : no impenitent sinner therefore is willing or ever did, “ *believe on him that justifieth the ungodly,* in the sense
“ the

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“ the gospel invites us to ; as was proved, p. 128, 129, “ 130.*——” Besides, if arguments will not do, yet *facts are stubborn things*. And it is a plain fact, that *David* was a true penitent, and was pardoned after he repented. *Psal. xxxii. 3. 4, 5.* and yet *David* was not a good man in such a sense as that he could be justified on the foot of his own goodness, according to *St. Paul*. Nay, just the reverse ; for from this very instance of *David*, *Paul* proves, that we are not justified by our own goodness, but by *believing on him that justifieth the ungodly*, *Rom. iv. 5, 6, 7, 8.*——And *Abraham* had been a true penitent above twenty years, as all parties acknowledge, when it was said of him, that *he believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness* ; which is the other fact by which *St. Paul* illustrates and proves his doctrine of justification. The objector therefore quite misunderstands *St. Paul*, whose real meaning has been already stated. Sect. V.——He whose heart is agreeable to the import of this objection, never yet saw

* N. B. Antinomian Converts when they *believe their sins are forgiven*, do not believe that *those sins* are forgiven, which they in fact, *stand charged with by the divine law*. For they do not think themselves *guilty of those sins*. They justify themselves in that, in which, the divine law chiefly condemns them. They say, that it is “ utterly impossible,” yea, inconsistent with our original constitution, and with the law of “ God,” to yield obedience to the first and great command, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*. And if, I, an unpardoned sinner, do not deserve eternal damnation for not loving God with all my heart, I do not need the pardon the gospel offers. Rather the offer of such a pardon is an injury to me. It supposes me to blame when I am not to blame. For if “ there is no loveliness conceivable” in the divine nature, till God is reconciled to me ; and if it is impossible, “ utterly impossible” to love him ; and even “ contrary to the constitution of a reasonable creature and to the law of God,” I cannot be at all to blame for not loving him, nor do I in this case, need any pardon at all.——Nay, the curse of the law in this case, must needs fill me with hatred and heart risings in spite of my heart.” Nor can I forgive my maker, and feel well to him, until he delivers me from the curse.—So that an Antinomian convert, is at the greatest distance from seeing that he needs the pardon which the gospel offers. See Sect. IX.

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the great evil of sin. For in the objection it is virtually denied to be an infinite evil.—Socinians and deists openly deny the infinite evil of sin, and on this ground deny the necessity of an infinite atonement. Antinomians are not so consistent; for they profess to believe an infinite atonement, and yet virtually deny sin to be an infinite evil.

OBJECT. IV. “To say that repentance is before forgiveness, disconcerts my whole scheme of religion, and razeth the very foundation of all my hopes. For it is granted on all hands, that true repentance ariseth from love to God. But to love God before my sins are pardoned, is impossible. For it is my believing that my sins are pardoned, that induces me to love God. When I can believe that christ died for me in particular, and that my sins are forgiven, then I can love God and repent. But to repent before forgiveness, is new doctrine to me.”

ANSW. TRUE, it is granted, that repentance arises from love to God. And therefore, if repentance is before forgiveness, love to God is before forgiveness too. And that this effectually overthrows the objector’s whole scheme, is also true beyond dispute. And as it is plain, that Christ ordered *repentance and remission of sins*, in this order, to be preached in his name to a sinful guilty world; and in this order the apostles preached them; so no man has any warrant from the gospel to preach or to believe forgiveness of sins, in any other order. Nay, he who believes his sins are forgiven before repentance, refusing to give credit to the word of God, he believes a lie; and all religious affections begotten by this belief, are founded in falsehood, and are an abomination in the sight of God. And thus it will appear when Christ comes to judge the world according to his own gospel.

OBJECT. V. “But are we not justified by faith alone?”

ANSW. I. WE are justified by Christ’s righteousness alone: if you speak of that which qualifies us for and recommends us to the divine favour, pardon and eternal life; neither faith nor repentance have, in this sense, any hand in our justification. To say otherwise, is to
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contradict law and gospel, and in effect to give up the whole of divine revelation. As has been already proved. *Seet. V.* "True, but are we not interested in the righteousness of Christ, by faith alone?"---

2. THERE is a kind of faith, which is, in its own nature, alone, as it first exists, unattended with any one christian grace: and through the whole period of its existence, it is alone. It begins to exist without repentance and conversion, and it continues to exist without a holy life. This is called, *James ii. 26. a dead faith.* As the body without the spirit is dead, so *faith without works is dead* also, ver. 17. it is *dead being alone.*

BEING alone.—By being alone, the apostle does not mean, that it is unattended by any kind of affections. Even the devil's faith, the apostle observes, is not alone in this sense. He not only *believes*, but also *trembles*. And many who have a dead faith, a faith which proves unfruitful, and so apparently and evidently a dead faith; yet, as our saviour observes, *receive the word with joy*, and endure for a while. So the Israelites *believed the Lord and his servant Moses* at the Red Sea, and *sang his praise, but soon forgot his works.* Their faith was not of such a kind as would answer the end, to carry them through the trials before them. When it came to be proved, it was found to be a dead faith. It was in its own nature dead from the first, although it did not appear to be dead till afterwards. Their joys were graceless joys. They had no true love to God in their hearts. That is, no love to God's true character. All their religious affections were merely from self-love, excited by a sense of their great deliverance, and the expectation of soon arriving to a land flowing with milk and honey. So their faith was unattended by any one divine virtue; it was alone, in this respect at first: and so, of course, it proved to be a faith *without works*, that is, without any holy works. For their faith was not without works of any kind. Nay, they were zealous and very forward in building the tabernacle, every one contributing of his own free will, enough, and more than enough. But all from selfish principles, expecting ere long to march for the promised land. But no sooner were they disappointed, than at once all their seeming goodness turned into blas-

blasphemy. Whereas *Moses*, after he was secluded from the promised land, loved God as well as ever, and was as faithful in his service. For he really loved the God, he believed in, he loved his true and real character, and was heartily interested in the honour of his great name. And this love gave him life and spirit, and naturally made him prayerful and active. And thus his faith worked by love. Without this love, his faith had been as dead and inactive as the faith of the carnal Israelites. But his supreme love to God, whom he constantly had in view, as it were *seeing him who is invisible*, made his faith a living faith. For he loved God so entirely, that it appeared to him, of all things in the universe, the best, to be wholly devoted to his interest and honour, as long as he lived. Yea, to love and enjoy him to perfection for ever, was the very *recompence of reward* he had in view, in the world to come. Whereas the carnal Israelites, the more they knew of God's real character, the more they hated it; till they came to wish themselves back again into Egypt; yea, to wish they had died in Egypt, rather than had any thing to do with the God of Israel.

FAITH *without Works* is dead.—without works—Where there is no love, there are no works, in the scripture sense of the word. *This is the love of God that ye keep his Commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.* It is a pleasure to imitate a character which charms our hearts, to honour a person we greatly esteem, and please one we greatly love. The duties of a christian life are only practical expressions of love to God; they are nothing else than love to God reduced to practice. Love to God is the life and soul of every good work. Where there is no love to God, all our works are *dead works*, in the scripture sense of the phrase. They are graceless, selfish, hypocritical works.—So that faith without works, without a course of holy obedience to all the divine commands, is a faith which is without love to God in the heart. And so it is a faith which is without a sense of the supreme infinite amiableness of the divine nature; without a sense of which, there can be no true sense of the infinite evil of sin. And so it is a faith without repentance in the first moment of its existence, and a faith
without

without works in the whole period of its existence. And so in its own nature a dead faith. And that a man cannot be justified by this kind of faith is evident, not only from the epistle of *James*, but from all the fore-cited texts of scripture, which teach that repentance is before forgiveness.

3. REPENTANCE is implied in the very nature of that true and living faith, by which alone a sinner is united to Christ, and interested in his righteousness and atonement, and so intitled to pardon, justification and eternal life. This already has been proved, p. 128, 129, 130, and shall be now still further confirmed.

IT is said concerning the apostolic converts, on the Day of Pentecost, *Act. ii.* that they *gladly received the word*; and it is manifest that in doing so, they became *true penitents* and *true believers*, both at once, in the estimation of the apostles. Compare *ver. 38, 41, 44.*

THERE are some Truths of such a nature, that they may be believed *with all the heart*, may be received for true *gladly*, and be acted upon as such, without repentance. Thus, in a time of great scarcity of bread on an island, the news of a plentiful importation of corn, to be distributed among the inhabitants without money and without price, to whosoever comes, may be received gladly, and believed with all the heart, and the people may flock together to the place of supply, without any thing like repentance.—So did the gospel simply bring the news of deliverance from hell, and of eternal joys in heaven, to be the portion of every child of *Adam*, who hears and believes the news, and takes it to himself; the news might be believed and rejoiced in by every guilty sinner who is terrified with the thoughts of eternal damnation, nor would any degree of penitency be implied in his faith. For as the famished inhabitants of an island would naturally be ravished with the news of corn; so every guilty impenitent sinner, frightened with the thoughts of hell, would be ravished with the news of such deliverance. But if the news the gospel brings does not consider us merely as in a state of great calamity, but as criminals; and condemns us wherein we are most apt to justify ourselves, and even declares us to be worthy of the eternal

nal pains of hell for that, for which we thought ourselves not at all too blame ; we shall receive the news as an abuse, and reject it with abhorrence, till our uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and we disposed to take all that blame to ourselves, which it supposes us justly chargeable with. But the gospel brings us news, " That as the divine law, which requires us in our present state to love God with all our hearts, and yield a perfect obedience to his will on pain of eternal woe, is holy, just and good, a glorious law, worthy to be kept in honour ; so the Son of God became incarnate and died upon the cross to do it honour, that God might be just and yet the justifier of the sinner that believes in Jesus. The plain import of which is, That, notwithstanding all our self-justifying pleas, the God who reigns above, is an infinitely glorious and amiable being, and his law perfect in beauty without a blemish ; and our disaffection and rebellion wholly inexcusable and infinitely criminal ; and we even too bad to be forgiven, unless through the blood of the Son of God. — But to believe this with all the heart, and gladly to receive this news for true, is to give up all our sin-extenuating, self-justifying pleas, to acknowledge ourselves infinitely vile and odious, and to loath and abhor ourselves in the sight of God, and even to look upon it a worthy and becoming, and god-like deed in the Most High to punish eternally in hell such as we. But thus to view God and his law, and the atonement of Christ, and our own character ; and with all our hearts to come into these sentiments as the very truth, and even *gladly to receive this word*, is to be true penitents.

THE Jews through mere disaffection to the divine character and to the divine law, hated Jesus of Nazareth, whose life and doctrines were the very image of his Father and did honour to his law ; and in their hatred they cried, Crucify him, crucify him ; and they led him forth to mount Calvary, and nailed him to the cross. Their whole conduct was an expression of mortal enmity to the true God and to his Son. When therefore Jesus was risen from the dead, and the Spirit poured out on the day of Pentecost, and the guilty Jews, in spite of all their prejudices, by thousands, forced fore against their wills to
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give into it, that he was in very deed the Messiah whom they had murdered, terrified by their horrid crimes, and the fears of eternal wrath, *pricked at the heart*, as though a sword had been ran through their vitals, they cry out in anguish, *What shall we do?*—To which *Peter* gives a very remarkable answer.—He does not say, “Do nothing: Be passive.” Nor does he say, “Believe, O believe your sins are all blotted out.”—But he says, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.* As if he had said, “Take all that blame to yourselves which belongs to you. Own the whole truth to God. Do not *cover*, but *confess* your crimes in his sight, and let your uncircumcised hearts be humbled: and in a sense eternal destruction is your due, look up to the free grace of God through the blood of Christ for pardon; and in token that all your dependance is on his mediation, merits and atonement, come be baptized in his name; and your baptism shall be to you an external sign of the remission of sins through his blood.”—And as many as had their eyes opened by the Spirit of God to view things in this light, *gladly received his word*, and were baptized. And these, by the apostles, were esteemed true penitents, and true believers; as they thus hearkened to the divine call, *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus.*

AND it is manifest from the nature of the case, that he who hath his eyes opened to see the glory of the divine nature, the beauty of the divine law, the infinite evil of sin, the need of an infinite atonement; and so to see his need of Christ; and at the same time views God as the supreme, all-sufficient good, ready to receive every sinner that returns to him through Christ; it is manifest, I say, that every one who is thus *taught of God*, will repent and return to God, as his sovereign Lord and supreme good, and return through Jesus Christ, who is the way to the Father, and the only way in the view of one thus divinely enlightened. For in the clearer light the glory of the divine nature and law is seen, in exact proportion will be the sense of the infinite evil of sin, and the need of Christ's infinite atonement and perfect righteousness. And so *repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*, will be naturally and inseparably con-

connected.—Yea, they will be necessarily implied in each other. For he who repents in the view of the glory of God, the glory of the law and of the atonement, will, in his repentance, look only to free grace through Jesus Christ, for mercy. And he who looks only to free grace through Jesus Christ for mercy, in a view of the glory of God, law, and atonement, will, in doing so, take the whole blame of his disaffection to a divine character, as exhibited in the law, and on the cross of Christ, to himself, judge and condemn himself, and in the very act of faith, repent and be converted.—When therefore it is said, *believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved*, the same thing is meant, as when it is said, *repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*. For the apostolic faith implies repentance in its own nature, and their repentance implies faith in its nature. Sometimes they only mention faith, and sometimes only repentance, and sometimes both together; but the same thing is always intended. For in their views, repentance and faith were mutually implied in each other. Let all the texts of scripture, in the old and new testaments, in which we are called to confess our sins, repent and turn to God, with a promise of forgiveness, or to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that we may be saved, be collected and compared together, and they will all jointly unite to confirm us in these sentiments.—The penitent Jew brought a bull or a goat to the altar, and all his hope of pardon was in the shedding of blood; for without shedding of blood there was no remission. Or if he were at a distance from the place of sacrifice and atonement, yet in all his prayers he looked toward God's holy temple. So *Jonah* did in the whale's belly, *Jonah* ii. 4. So *Daniel* did in Babylon, *Dan.* vi. 10. And it is evident, this was the constant practice of all the pious Jews from the whole tenor of *Solomon's* prayer in *1 Kings* viii. and for a Jew to look toward the holy temple, where God dwelt in the most holy place, over the mercy-seat, which covered the ark, in which the law was placed in the most honourable situation, while sacrifices were offered without, and incense within, was the same thing as for a penitent Christian to look to the free grace of God through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ,

Christ, who in his life and death, and now by his intercession in heaven, magnifies the law and makes it honourable. For a Jew to confess his sins, repent and turn unto the Lord, and pray toward the holy temple; was the same, as for one in a christian country to repent and be converted, and believe in the name of Jesus Christ.

BUT if any man will still affirm, that we are justified by a faith which is alone, which does not imply repentance and conversion in it's nature, it may be boldly asserted, that he contradicts Christ, who sent his apostles to preach in his name *repentance and remission of sin*; and his apostles, who cried, *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*. Especially as Christ doth as expressly declare, that *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*; as he does, that *he that believeth not shall be damned* *.

THUS the point is proved, that *Repentance is before Forgiveness*. And thus all objections are answered, and so the way opened for the following remarks.

I. IF repentance is before forgiveness; then no man ever was, or ever will be forgiven, till first he is brought to true repentance. All those therefore are deluded, who, while yet impenitent, believe their sins to be forgiven. And the stronger their belief is, the greater is their delusion.—And again,

II. ALL those definitions of justifying faith, which leave repentance and conversion out of it's nature, are definitions of a faith, by which no man ever was, or ever will be justified. Such, for instance, as make faith a thing, in which the mind is merely passive, such a bare belief of the bare truth, as implies no act, exertion or exercise of the heart; which effectually excludes repentance and conversion. And such as make faith to consist in a belief, that there is forgiveness with God for

* This very same doctrine, that *repentance is implied in justifying faith*, now asserted in opposition to *Antinomians*, was, near 30 years ago, asserted and defended in opposition to *Arminians*, by the late learned Mr. Edwards, in his sermon on *justification by faith alone*. p. 103—114.—A sermon worthy to be universally read and attended to through the British dominions.

impenitent sinners, as such ; which is evidently to believe a lie *. And such as make faith to consist merely in a belief, that Christ is mine, and that my sins are forgiven, before I repent.—These, and all such like definitions of justifying faith, are of no manner of use, but to comfort those impenitent sinners, against whom the gospel, as well as the law, reveals the wrath of God.

And again,

III. ALL those schemes of religion, the import of which is, that we are not wholly and entirely to blame, in not being perfectly conformed to the divine law ; and consequently, that it does not belong to us to take the whole blame to ourselves, and repent ; are diametrically opposite to the gospel of Christ : which calls upon us to repent and be converted, as being wholly to blame for not continuing in all things written in the book of the law to do them ; yea, infinitely to blame ; so that it became the wisdom of God, not to forgive us, without an infinite atonement. To say that this law was too se-

* Mr. Sandeman speaking of the atonement, says, “ All its true friends will readily join in affirming, that Christ came to render *impenitent sinners accepted unto everlasting life*, by the works which he himself wrought ; and thus, by the discovery of preventing goodness, to lead them to repentance.” *Letters on Theron*, p. 382, edit. 2d. So then, according to him, neither *Moses* nor the prophets, nor Christ, nor the Apostles, who all taught that repentance was before forgiveness, were true friends to the Atonement. Nay, so far from it, that they rendered the atonement, according to Mr. Sandeman, entirely needless. For he affirms, that true penitents may be forgiven without any atonement at all, as was before observed. *SECT. V.* Mr. Sandeman sums up his whole scheme in *faith, hope, and charity*. His faith is a belief, that there is forgiveness with God through the atonement for impenitent sinners, while such ; which is a lie. A belief of this lie, is the foundation of his *hope*, that his sins are forgiven. And this false hope, this hope built on falshood, is the foundation of his *love*. The whole of his religion, “ consists in love to that which relieves him.” *Letters to Mr. Pyke*, p. 8. that is, in love to the doctrine of forgiveness, p. 87. that is, in love to this doctrine, that there is forgiveness with God through the atonement for impenitent sinners, while such. That is, in love to a lie.—

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vere, and that our blame is not so great, as this law supposes; is to declare, that it does not belong to us to repent in the sense the gospel calls us to: and to reject the atonement of Christ, which supposes the whole blame to be in us, as an injurious reflection on our character: and even implicitly to declare Jesus Christ to be an impostor. For as Christ lived and died to do honour to the divine law in all it's extent, thereby declaring it to be wholly right, and we in fact as much to blame, as that supposes, to say, we are not, which is the language of every impenitent heart, is to say, that Christ was an impostor. So that impenitence and infidelity are in their own nature inseparably connected, on the one hand; even as repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, are on the other.

IV. ALL those schemes of religion. which in pretence grant the divine law to be holy, just and good, a glorious law, and that repentance is before forgiveness; but yet implicitly deny it, by asserting, that it is impossible a sinner, should be brought to view the law as such, so as cordially to take all the blame to himself and repent, until he knows that his sins are forgiven, are inconsistent with themselves, as well as with the gospel of Christ; which makes such repentance necessary in order to the forgiveness of sins, and calls upon sinners thus to repent that their sins may be blotted out, and declares that Christ is exalted to give such repentance to Israel.—To repent that we have broken a law we hate, is the repentance of an obstinate rebel; and is, in it's own nature, a lie. Like that in *Psal. lxi. 3. Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves* (or as it is in the Margin, *lie*) *unto thee.*

V. As the whole tenour of the gospel of Christ gives the strongest assurance, that no impenitent sinner, remaining such, shall ever be forgiven; so the whole tenour of all false gospels is to persuade impenitent sinners, while such, to believe that their sins are forgiven. Some schemes do this by preaching up a counterfeit repentance, and promising forgiveness to that; mean while justifying sinners in their continuing distitute of that repentance to which the gospel calls them: as the

SECT. VIII. *Repentance before Forgiveness.* 143

Socinian, Arminian, Neonomian, &c. *—and other schemes expressly teach, that we are forgiven before re-

* Of the counterfeit sorts of repentance which are preached up, these two are the chief (1.) Some say, that the divine law, which originally required us to love God with all our hearts, and yield a perfect obedience to his will, is abated: and therefore we are not to blame in not being perfectly conformed to it: and therefore it does not belong to us to repent of this non-conformity. And so the sinner is justified in being without that very repentance, to which the gospel calls him. And now to repent wherein they fall short of a conformity to their abated law is substituted in the room of true repentance. And they being ignorant of the law of perfection and the infinite evil of sin, are prepared to make a righteousness of their false repentance; and know no need of Christ only to purchase this abatement of the law, and to make up for their defects of obedience to it, thus abated.—(2.) Others, who say, the divine law is in full force, unaltered, unabated; yet exempt themselves, from blame by saying, “we have no more power to love God perfectly, than the man with the withered hand, had to stretch out his hand.” And when they come to explain themselves, they make the inability of a sinner to be as innocent a kind of a thing, as was the man’s with a withered hand. But who sees not, that the man with a withered hand was not *at all to blame*; for he could not help his hand being withered, let his heart be ever so well inclined to it. It would perfectly have suited his heart to have had that hand well. It was owing to no fault in him that it remained withered. He might be sorry for it as a calamity, but could not blame himself for it as a crime. And even after Christ had restored it whole as the other, although he might be thankful for it as a benefit done to him, yet he could not blame himself, neither could he repent, that his withered hand had not been well sooner.—And thus, while this is supposed to be an exact representation of the true nature of our inability perfectly to conform to the divine law in heart and life, true repentance is for ever secluded. No blame belongs to us in this case, nor can we on this scheme take any blame to ourselves, before, at, or after our supposed conversion; for not being *perfect as our father which is in heaven is perfect*.—And thus the sinner is justified in his impenitency. And in exact proportion as the sinner is justified, God and his law stand condemned. For there is blame some where, and if not in us, it must be in him who blames us, even in him who says, *cursed is every one that continueth not in all things*.

pentance.

pentance. Which is the case with various sorts of *Antinomian* schemes. But all false schemes, how much soever they differ among themselves, agree in promising eternal life to those who are destitute of true repentance.

VI. If according to God's established method of dispensing pardon to his criminal guilty creatures, repentance is before forgiveness, we may hence see the harmony between the impetration and application of redemption: both exactly agree in their nature and tendency to honour God, to magnify his law, to establish his authority, to discountenance and imbitter sin, to humble the sinner, to glorify grace, and to exalt Christ.

THE cross of Christ, in the sight of the whole intellectual System, declared, that God was wholly right, and that we were wholly wrong, and as much to blame as the divine law supposed. And so declared, that God is an absolutely perfect, and infinitely glorious and amiable being; and that his law, which requires us to love him with all our hearts on pain of eternal death, is holy, just and good; and that our disaffection to the divine character, and rebellion against him, is inexcusable, and even infinitely criminal. In consequence of which, the gift of Christ to die in our room, that God might be just, and yet the justifier of the believer, appears to be an act of grace infinitely great, and absolutely free. And because Christ humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, in this great work; therefore is he exalted to sit even at his father's right hand, honoured with all the honours of heaven; and repentance and remission of sins are granted in his name to apostate, God hating, guilty rebels. And thus God is honoured, Christ exalted, grace glorified, and sin condemned in the work of our redemption.

In exact harmony with which, the guilty criminal is, by the almighty power of divine grace, brought to view things in this light, and to be affected accordingly. To look upon God as an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being; upon the divine law as holy, just and good, a glorious law; upon his own disaffection and rebellion, as entirely inexcusable and infinitely criminal; upon the gift of Christ, as an act of grace infinite great and absolutely free; and in these views, and with

an answerable frame of heart, to look only to free grace through Jesus Christ, now at his father's right hand, for pardon, as of mere free Mercy, to a wretch so infinitely odious and ill-deserving, as that it had been an act worthy of God to have cast him into eternal burnings. —And thus all is exactly suited to exalt God, to honour the law, to imbitter sin, to glorify grace, and render Christ exceeding precious in the sinner's heart.

And so,

THE same views, spirit and temper, which were in Christ Jesus to perfection, when he wrought out our redemption on the cross, are in measure communicated to a dead sinner, when he is quickened and raised up to a new and divine life; and so he is *made partaker of the divine nature* and becomes a living branch in the true vine, a living member Christ's body. *For of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace.* For he and all the members of his body are one, not only one relatively, but one in heart, one in spirit, the same spirit which dwells in Christ being communicated to them. *For ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be the spirit of Christ dwells in you.* —In regeneration and conversion these views and affections begin to take place and from year to year, *as with open face they behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord*; so they are more and more *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, till all come to be *one with him as he and his father are one.*

BUT on the contrary, if, as some plead, pardon is granted to the impenitent sinner while such, a belief of which is the foundation of his love and of all his religion; then in the application of redemption, God and his law are dishonoured, the import of Christ's death is denied, sin is justified, the sinner's self-justifying spirit is gratified, and the grace of the gospel kept out of view. For this is the native language of such a sinner's heart,
 "there is no loveliness conceivable in the divine nature,
 "but what results from his love to me, and it is impossible I should love God from any other motive,
 "nor is it my duty, nor is the gospel designed to bring me to it, nor am I to blame that I do not, nor do I
 "need the atonement of Christ in the case, or pardon
 "for not loving God for the loveliness of his own

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"nature

“ nature : for there is no loveliness in his nature, but
 “ as he loves me and designs to save me.” Thus the
 absolutely perfect, the infinitely glorious and amiable
 being, who is by nature God, in himself, let me be
 saved or damned, infinitely worthy of supreme love and
 honour and universal obedience, according to the united
 import of the divine law, and of the cross of Christ, is
 at once stripped of all the original, independent, eternal,
 immutable glories of his Godhead, the divine law is vir-
 tually pronounced tyrannical, the import of Christ’s death
 impiously denied, his atonement pronounced needless,
 and himself virtually declared to be an impostor, our
 being dead in sin justified, our disaffection to the divine
 character declared to be no crime, or reconciliation to
 be no duty, no pardon, no atonement, no sanctifier
 needed in the case. “ No, for we are right, God and
 “ his law are wrong, if God will repent and make res-
 “ tution, if God will deliver us from the curse of the
 “ law, and give us heaven, we will forgive him, feel no
 “ more hearted-risings toward him, but love him if he
 “ will thus love us. Otherwise it is impossible we should
 “ love him, impossible but that we should hate him and his
 “ law : for there is no loveliness conceivable in his nature,
 “ unless he will love and save me.”—Thus the im-
 penitent, proud, haughty wretch ungod the Deity,
 condemns his law, blasphemes the cross of Christ,
 justifies himself, denies his sin, his need of atonement,
 of regeneration, of repentance, of pardon, and is filled
 with love and joy in a firm belief that God almighty
 looks upon things as he does. And this impious, blas-
 phemous love and joy, he calls by the sacred name
 of christian piety.

SECTION IX.

The Nature and Effects, the Cause and Cure, of a Self-righteous Spirit.

THE nature and effects, the cause and cure of a self-righteous spirit, might have been collected from the principles laid down and proved in the other sections of this essay, by the judicious reader; but for the sake of weaker capacities, it may not be amiss, if these things are briefly stated: And the rather, as it is of great importance, that this subject be well understood.——In general then,

A Self-righteous spirit consists in a disposition to think more of highly ourselves than we ought to think. And so, it is pride. And it stands in opposition to humility, which is to *think soberly of our selves, and as we ought to think*, as St Paul defines it, *Rom. xii. 3*. And a self-righteous spirit arises from blindness to the divine glory, and ignorance of our true character and state, as they appear in the sight of God, and as they really are compared with his holy law. The spiritual knowledge of God and his law, and a view of our selves in contrast with God and his law thus known, is the cure of a self-righteous spirit. When the divine character as exhibited in his law begins to appear in it's infinite glory, our character will begin to appear in it's infinite odiousness. And this begets a disposition to think soberly of our selves, and as we ought to think. And so we, through the law, become dead to the law, that we may live to God.——

But to be more particular,

I. A self-righteous spirit consists in a disposition to think more highly of our selves than we ought to think. How we ought to think of our selves hath been already stated, *SECT. III. p. 38, 39, 40*. When a man thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think on the account of his fine cloaths, he is called by the odious

name of a Fop. But when in the exercise of the same temper, he thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, upon religious accounts, he is called by the more odious name of a self-righteous man. *Luk. xviii. 9--14.* The same spirit of pride, which leads one to be proud in a view of his fine cloaths, inclines another to be proud in a view of his large estate, or honourable parentage, or good bodily features, or superior genius, or great acquired mental accomplishments. And it is the same spirit which leads all mankind in general to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think in religious respects. For a self-righteous spirit is common to mankind in general, although in different men it operates differently; and in some more than in others. It reigns in all unregenerate men: and it is mortified in Saints no farther than they are sanctified, and will not be entirely irradiated out of their hearts until they become perfectly holy. It operates differently in different men.

In the *profane* it operates to keep them secure, to fortify them against the fears of death and hell, and guard them against the terrors of the divine law; that they may take their full swing in sinful pleasures unmolested. For thus it inclines them to think, "I can break off my sins when I please. And whenever I break off, God will be obliged to forgive me." Herein he thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, in two respects. *First*, he thinks his heart to be much better than it is, even that he can find in his heart to give up all sin and turn to God. But if he would make a thorough trial he would find it to be a mistake. He would find that sin has full possession of his soul. That he loves it so intirely, that it is not in his heart to be inclined to forsake it. To forsake sin, in general, I mean; for he may be inclined to change one lust for another, turn out a black devil and take in a white one, leave profaneness, and become a civil, sober self-righteous hypocrite. But to turn from all sin in general, and to turn unto the lord, is not in his heart. *For the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.*---And, *Secondly*, he thinks too highly of himself another respect, viz. That there will be so much
virtue

virtue in his repentance and reformation, as to atone for all his past wickedness, and intitle him to the favour of God. Whereas, according to the divine estimation, there is so much blame and ill-desert in one wilful transgression, as to make an eternal forfeiture of his soul, and plunge him into a hopeless, remediless state, according to a rule of strict justice. So that if he had no more interest in *Adam's Sin* than in *Noah's*; yet after one transgression, he is a lost creature, liable to die and go to hell in a moment; and God absolutely unobliged, if he lives, to grant him any assistance of his spirit, or ever to regard any of his prayers. For if one transgression exposes a man to the curse of the law, according to *Gal. iiii. 10.* then the transgressor may be justly sent to hell immediately. And therefore God is unobliged to shew him any favour of any kind. And it is entirely owing to pride and self-conceit, that sinners are inclined to view things in another light. They think more highly of themselves than they ought to think.---And this, which is natural to profane sinners, has a great influence to keep them secure in sin.

IN *awakened* sinners it operates to incline them, by their reformations, prayers, tears, &c. to go about to establish their own righteousness. For being so terrified with the thoughts of eternal destruction, that they can now no longer go on quietly in their sinful pleasures, they now go about to pacify the deity by their amendment and fervent prayers. And thus they think, "If I repent and reform, if I humble myself before God and pray, and do as well as I can, he is obliged to shew me mercy: For it would be hard and unjust in God to require more of his poor creatures than they can do, and then damn them for not doing." And perhaps thousands and ten thousands build their hopes for Heaven on this foundation, and live and die upon it. Not considering, that *if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* Not once reflecting, that if their best doings ought in reason to recommend them to the divine favour, there was no occasion for the incarnation and death of the son of God. And that therefore, if they are right, the whole gospel is overthrown. Their pride absolutely blinds their eyes, that

they cannot see ; and stops their ears, that they cannot hear ; and hardens their hearts, that they cannot understand.—Or, if some men, of more penetration, perceive that this way of thinking does in fact overthrow Christianity, they will sooner give up the whole of divine revelation, than give up their pride. And from this source it is, that *Great Britain* is so filled with infidels. And from this source it is, that insidelity begins to creep into *New England*, which if divine grace prevents not, may in half a century make great progress. For as the Pharisees would sooner believe, that Jesus *cast out devils by Beelzebub*, than that they were *serpents and a generation of vipers*, worthy of the damnation of hell ; even so it is here.—But mean while,

IN *Antinomian* converts, to extricate themselves out of these embarrassments, a self-righteous spirit prompts and emboldens them, to take a short and easy method to think well of God and of themselves both at once, and so their pride and religion become perfectly harmonious ; in the belief of these two maxims. 1. *God loves me impenitent as I am.* 2. *To believe that God thus loves me, and to love him merely in this belief, is the sum of religion.* For in the belief of these two articles, the divine law, which stands prepared to *slay* the self-righteous sinner, is set aside, and turned out of doors ; the curse, by the first ; the command, by the second ; and so the divine law being cashiered by this belief, the self-righteous sinner stands completely self-justified. He believes, or rather imagines himself into the love of God, and out of the reach of the law ; and so into a good opinion of the deity, and of himself, both at once. Or rather through that enmity to God's real character, with which his self-righteous spirit inspired him ; emboldened by the same self-righteous spirit, he forms a deity in his own fancy all made up of love to him, which suits his heart ; and being suited with the deity he has made, is pleased with himself more than ever. And so he thinks himself a believer, a saint, a disciple of Christ, and that he shall be rewarded in Heaven for all the reproach he brings upon himself ; not knowing that enmity to God and his law, and to the cross of Christ, lie at the bottom, and are the source of all his religion. And thus,
and

and in this way, he is confirmed and self-justified in thinking more highly of himself than he ought to think. —And thus we see how a self-righteous spirit operates differently in different persons. These three sorts are mentioned only as a specimen; for instead of three, there may perhaps be three hundred different ways in which this same spirit works.

II. A self-righteous, is a sin-extenuating, self-justifying, and in consequence a law-hating, God-condemning disposition. And so stands in direct opposition to *repentance toward God, and faith toward our lord Jesus Christ*. Just in exact proportion as a man is inclined to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, is he inclined to make sin-extenuating, self-justifying pleas. And every word he says in his own justification, is to the condemnation of God and of his law. For if in fact we are not so bad, nor so much to blame, as the divine law supposes; he who made the law will stand condemned. Take *Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*, which are the very words with which St. Paul militated against a self-righteous spirit in his day, and shew what the divine law requires in heart and life, and shew what is implied in the curse, and from the eternal punishment threatened, infer the infinite evil of sin, and by consequence our infinite obligations to love God with all our hearts, and yield a perfect obedience to his will; and shew that God is absolutely unobliged according to law, that perfect rule of right, either to assist the sinner, or to pardon his defects; and urge this law home upon a self-righteous heart, as the law of the great God, the law which was honoured on the cross of Christ, and which will be put in execution at the day of judgment on every chittless sinner, angels and saints shouting *hallelujah* all around the judge; and as the anvil bounds back the hammer, so will such an heart resist the truth. And while he extenuates his sin and justifies himself, he will blame the law, and condemn the law-giver. —For,

Says the *profane*, —“to suppose that my delaying repentance one day longer, is so great a crime, as justly
 “to expose me to the eternal pains of hell without
 “hope, cannot be true. Nor will I ever believe God

“ is so unjust as to put his frail creatures under such a law.”——And

Says the *awakened*,——“ I have reformed and humbled myself before God, and prayed, and done what I can. And to believe now after all, that God is still absolutely unobliged to shew me mercy ; that he requires perfect love and perfect obedience on pain of eternal damnation ; is more than I can bear. It cannot be justified. The very thoughts of it breeds hatred and heart-riſings in spite of my heart.”——

And,

Says the *Antinomian* convert,——“ I always found by experience that it was impossible to love God, before I believed his love to me. And by experience I still find, that it is impossible to love God in any other view. All therefore that God really requires, is, that we believe his love to us, and in that belief love him again.”——And thus all three stand discharged from that duty which the divine law requires, self-justified ; God and his law implicitly condemned.

THE divine law supposeth, that God is an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being ; and on this ground it requires mankind, each and every one, to love him with all their hearts on pain of eternal death. This it requires even of the Gentiles, who never heard of the grace of the gospel, and consequently of all mankind antecedent to that consideration. And in the sight of God all were without excuse, every mouth stopped, and in this view of the case he gave his son to die upon the cross, to declare this law to be holy, just, and good. But, in this view, the divine law is universally hated by every self-righteous heart, and a non-conformity thereto is universally justified, from the most profane to the most devout.——“ I cannot,” cries one,——“ It is impossible,” cries another,——“ The very thought of such a law breeds hatred and heart-riſings in spite of my heart,” cries each and every one.*

Now

* Mr. Cudworth has gone farther, and taken a very extraordinary step indeed, to justify the self-righteous sinner, in not loving that character of God, which is exhibited in the divine law, in honour to which an incarnate God died on the cross. He not only declares, and endeavours to prove, that

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Now that belief, which gives comfort to a self-righteous heart, thus at enmity against the divine law, by whatever humble name it is called, does in fact feed and confirm a self-righteous spirit; and for that reason

it is "utterly impossible" to love it; but also that to love it, is in its own nature a wicked thing, "contrary to the law of God." p. 224. And if "contrary to the law of God," it is contrary to the nature of God. God himself then does not love that character. That is, God the father does not love himself. No wonder then he thinks, that to love this character is "beyond what *Adam* did in Paradise, beyond the scripture saints, the apostles, and even *Jesus Christ* himself." For if it is "contrary to the law of God," and so a wicked thing, it must be contrary to the nature of God, and of every holy being in the universe. And thus the self-righteous sinner stands completely justified, in not loving God's true and real character. Yea, has the comfort to think it would be a sin to love it: A thing "contrary to the law of God."

But "contrary to the law of God," and wicked as it is; no sooner does he see *Theron* brought through the regenerating influences of the holy spirit, in a view of the amiableness of this character, to take all the blame of his disaffection to the deity to himself, and repent and return to God through *Jesus Christ*, all his hope of acceptance arising simply from mere free grace through the great atonement, but he changes his tone; and for the sake of condemning *Theron*, expressly contradicts himself.—For now, all at once, that very thing, which he had just been trying to prove to be "contrary to the law of God," is affirmed to be of so holy and divine a nature, as to have virtue and merit enough in it to atone for all our past sins, and recommend us to the favour of God, and entitle us to eternal life, without any need of *Christ* or his atonement. Such converts as I make my *Theron* to be, he affirms "have no occasion for the sovereign mercy of God in *Jesus Christ*. They "are entitled to life in their own name, on the foundation of "their own love, whenever they can be found." p. 227, 228. And this he sets himself to prove, p. 261, 262. from the words of the prophet *Ezekiel*, which has been already answered.—So that according to Mr. *Cudworth*, that which is in its own nature sinful, "contrary to the law of God," is more meritorious than all the virtue of the heavenly hosts, which would not be sufficient to atone for one sin. Yea, its virtue is as effectual to save, as the blood and righteousness of the son of God.—If Mr. *Cudworth* can believe all this, what cannot he believe?—And can such a man be reasoned with?

will be tenaciously maintained, although without any evidence from scripture, sense or reason. So, one believes, that if he will do as well as he can, God has promised to save him; and this gives him ease. And another believes, that God has promised absolutely to save him without any condition at all; and this gives him comfort more abundantly. And while each remains strong in his belief, by which the divine law is set aside and removed out of sight, each enjoys himself full well. But if light should break in, and the divine law come into view, and their true character and state appear, dead in sin and under the curse, both would return to their "hatred and heart-risings" again, as much as ever. For the sin-extenuating, self-justifying temper remaining unmortified, God and his law will be, of course, hated and condemned, whenever they come into view. The faith of both is of use only to keep God and his law out of sight and out of mind, and thus it comforts them. Let God and his law come into view, and their faith is destroyed, and their comforts are gone, and their heart-risings come again. And therefore both are to the last degree tenacious of their different schemes. A self-righteous spirit lies at the bottom of all their zeal, as their schemes are adapted to give ease and comfort to self-righteous hearts, and guard and defend them from the terrors of the divine law, prevent the blasphemous workings of their own minds, which beget horror and awaken the fears of future wrath.

III. A sin extenuating, self justifying, self-righteous frame of heart is in direct opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ.--For had our disaffection to the divine character not been as criminal as the curse of the law supposed, there had been no reason the Son of God should have been made a curse in our stead. Had there been any plea to extenuate our fault, or in the least to have justified us in our not loving God with all our hearts, the law had not been strictly right. And God's being so severe against sin had not been a beauty but a blemish in his character. And if there had been a blemish in the divine character, to love him with all our hearts, had been strictly and properly impossible. The fault would have been not in us, but in God. And so

no need of Christ to die, to declare God to be wholly right. Rather, as on this hypothesis, God was wrong, he ought to have retracted, to have repealed his law, and granted us relief; he ought in justice to have done it, and a mediator was altogether needless in the case. And thus, the sinner is justified, and God condemned, and the whole gospel overthrown. And this is the native tendency of a self-righteous spirit. A self-righteous spirit is therefore in direct opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ.---And accordingly,

A self-righteous spirit was the source of the hatred and heart-riplings of the Pharisees against the character of Jesus Christ. They could not bear to think themselves so bad as his, doctrines imported; and therefore they became soon disaffected toward his person. *Joh. iii, 19, 20, 21.* And when he plainly told them, what they were in the sight of God, and what they deserved at his hands, in the *xxiii^d Chap. Mat.* they immediately conspired to put him to death. The *xxiii^d of Matth.* contains our Saviour's last speech to the Pharisees, who three days after got him fast nailed to the cross. *Ye Serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell,* were words the Pharisees never could forgive. The character these words gave the Pharisees was no worse, was but just equal to the import of the divine law, the law God gave to *Moses*, the very law which the Pharisees pretended to believe and love, but which they really hated. Our Saviour therefore merited their resentment by these words, no more than God the Father did by his law. And indeed, in the height of all their religion and devotion, they hated God the Father, as much as they did Jesus his well beloved Son. And their hatred to the true God had led them to frame a false image of God, in their own Fancy, to suit their own hearts. This false image they loved, and were zealous for his cause. And this love and zeal, infinitely odious to God as it was, they made a righteousness of and gloried in. This proud self-righteous spirit prepared them to hate and murder the Son of God, the express image of his Father. And in their conduct, as in a glass, the nature and tendency of a self-righteous spirit may be clearly seen.

IV. A sin-extenuating, self-justifying, self-righteous spirit, is cordially beloved, approved of and justified; and so reigns in the heart of every unregenerated man; how great soever the zeal of some may seem to be against it. For he who condemns it in one shape, may heartily like it in another. And every unregenerate man, of whatever profession, *Aminian*, *Antinomian*, or *Calvinist*, is at enmity against God and his law; and therefore is disposed to justify himself, and lay the blame upon his Maker. Being better instructed, many may keep their thoughts to themselves, as being rationally convinced they are wrong, how naturally soever they flow from their hearts, and indicate the true temper of their souls; but thousands will boldly speak out their minds, and in their ignorance attempt to justify themselves before their Maker.

"It is impossible," cries one, "That I should love God, before I know my sins are pardoned: For there is no loveliness in his nature in any other view." And if there is no loveliness in his nature, but on this account; then the law, which without any respect to this requires us to love God with all the heart, is wrong. And so the man is not to blame, but stands justified, in his non conformity to this perfect rule of right.

"But the divine law requires sinless perfection," says another, "and that on the penalty of eternal damnation: but this is more than any Son of *Adam* can do."---And what consequence would he draw from these words, to which he has no determinate ideas, as such men will admit of no distinction between *want of heart*, and *want of power*---What consequence, I say?---Why, in his esteem, no Son of *Adam* is to be blamed, for not being perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. And so an apostate world all stand justified at once, in their *not continuing in all things written in the book of the law to do them*. And therefore the holy one of Israel must be condemned, for denouncing the curse in this case. And the Son of God must be supposed to have died a sacrifice to tyranny. All which is no better than downright blasphemy, pregnant with infidelity. But a self-righteous heart will maintain it's ground, and stand the

the shock, although to the subversion of all religion, natural and revealed.

THEREFORE I say, a self-righteous, self-justifying disposition, not only operates, but reigns in every unregenerate heart. It is loved, it is approved, it is justified, it has full possession of the heart. Even so full possession, as to be proof against all the miracles which support the truth of divine Revelation. And therefore let God declare in his law, that any defect of perfect obedience merits eternal woe; and let the goodness of this law be asserted and sealed by the blood of an incarnate God, it is all to no purpose. A self-justifying heart will stand it's ground, and vindicate it self, in opposition to all.

OUR blessed Saviour, the express image of his Father's person, viewed the character of the Pharisees in the same light his Father's law did, and in his heart he verily thought "all heaven ought for ever to love and adore the infinitely glorious majesty, although they received their just desert, and perished for ever. *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* And they had viewed themselves in the same light, and had an answerable frame of heart; they had not been disgusted, but rather pleased with his character. "Truth, Lord, "we are serpents, we are a generation of vipers, an infinitely odious and hateful race, worthy of the damnation of hell, nor would it be a blemish, but a beauty "in the divine conduct, to send us thither." This would have been to have thought soberly of themselves, and as they ought to have thought *. But just the reverse

* *This would have been to have thought soberly of themselves, and-as they ought to have thought.*——No, says Mr. Cudworth, this would have been "the summit" of self-righteousness p. 224.—That is, if the Pharisees had viewed their own character in that odious point of light, in which Christ did, it had been the highest degree of pride—Why then were not the Pharisees pleased with that odious character Christ gave them? Why was not their pride gratified by those words, *ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* Does Mr. Cudworth, really believe that God the Father and God the Son viewed the character of the Pharisees in a point of light, in which, if the Pharisees had viewed

verse was the temper of their hearts. "You think
 " Damnation good enough for us. And we think Cruci-
 " ffixion good enough for you. *Away with him, away*
 " *with him; crucify him, crucify him.*" And if these
 men *had no cloke for their sin* in our Saviour's eyes, 1700
 years ago, we may be assured that all our self-justifying
 pleas will be esteemed of no weight in his sight, when he
 comes to judge the world, according to his Father's law,
 in all it's rigour. So far, so very far from it, that when he
 pronounces the final sentence, angels and saints will
 shout forth their *Hallelujah's* all around him.

THERE is not a self-justifying sinner on earth, who
 has a better plea to make in his own behalf than many
 a Pharisee had.—Can you say, "I am strict in external
 " duties?"—"I more," might the Pharisee say. "All these
 " things have I kept from my youth up. Yea, as
 " touching the righteousness of the law, I am blameless.
 " For low these many years do I serve thee, neither
 " transgressed I at any time thy commandment."—
 "Yes, but I practice many difficult and self-denying
 " duties," says the sinner. "I more," says the Pha-
 risee, "I fast twice in the week, and give tythes of all
 " that I possess."—"But I am hearty and zealous in
 " religion," says the sinner. "I more," says the pha-
 risee; "for with great expence and fatigue I compass
 sea and land to make proselytes."—"But I believe
 " that God loves me, and that I shall assuredly have
 " eternal life, and in this belief, I love God;" says the
 sinner. "I more," says the pharisee, "For we know we
 " not only have *Abraham* to our Father, but God is our
 " Father. And I can thank God I am not as other
 " men, in his very presence, for he knows how good

viewed themselves, it must have cherished and fed a self-
 righteous spirit? To believe this is worse than infidelity. And
 yet this is implied in his charging my *Theron* with self-
 righteousness, merely for viewing his character, in the very
 light, in which it stood in the eyes of God and of his Son, in
 which view, he thought in his heart, "that all heaven ought
 " for ever to love and adore the infinitely glorious majesty,
 " although he received his just desert and perished for ever."
 And so God the Father thought, and so thought Jesus Christ
 his Son.

" and

“and how upright I am.”—“Yes, but the pharisees
“hated Jesus Christ,” says the sinner. True, but no
more than you hate that character of God which is exhi-
bited in that law, to do honour to which, the Son of
God laid down his life. They felt towards the charac-
ter of Jesus Christ, just as every self-righteous sinner
feels towards the character of God the Father exhibited
in his law.—“Yes, but I believe the gospel, and they
“rejected it.” You cordially believe the gospel in no
other sort than they believed the writings of *Moses*, viz.
understood in such a manner as to justify them, even as
they justified themselves. In every other sense, whatever
orthodox profession the self-righteous sinner may make
with his mouth, yet in the temper of his heart, he rejects
the gospel as much as they did. For no man believes
that Jesus is the Christ, with all his heart, but he who is
born of God. 1 *Joh. v. 1*. Indeed, you may give the
gospel a new meaning of your own, just as they did the
writings of *Moses*, and this new meaning you may love
and believe cordially, even as they believed their phari-
saical scheme. But the very truth you hate and oppose
in the temper of your heart, even as they hated and op-
posed Christ in an open and publick manner.—“But
“it is impossible this should be my character, for then
“I am no better than an enemy to the God of heaven.”
Says the sinner. True, exactly true. This is your very
character in the sight of heaven. As it is written, *Rom.*
viii. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject
to his law, neither indeed can be. And just so our blessed
Saviour, the meek and lowly Jesus, told the Pharisees,
ye serpents, ye generation of vipers. Nor had they any
reason to take his plain dealing ill at his hands.

V. THERE is nothing short of the regenerating in-
fluences of the holy spirit, that can effectually take down
the pride of a self-righteous heart, and beget a disposition
to justify God, and take blame to ourselves, answerable
to the import of the divine law.

SCRIPTURAL and rational arguments cannot do it.
Rather as the *Leviathan* in the book of *Job*, esteemeth iron as
straw, and brass as rotten Wood; so all scriptural and
rational arguments are before a self-righteous heart.

Miracles

Miracles are also insufficient, For when the Pharisees could evade the force of them no other way, they would, even in contradiction to common sense, declare, *he casteth out devils by Beelzebub.* Just as if Satan might be divided against himself.

NAY, scripture and reason and miracles, all united together, are not able to take down the pride of a self-righteous heart. St Paul tried them all, and he did his best, and a little before his death, in an epistle to his Son Timothy, he fairly owns himself beat. *2 Tim. iii. 13. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* He could make them see that they were inconsistent with themselves, and even make it appear to others that they were *self-condemned*, but still they would obstinately maintain their self-righteous principles although they were excommunicated for it. *Tit. iii. 10, 11.* And these men were our *ensamples*, and these things were *written for our instruction.*

For an impenitent sinner to “believe that God loves him and that his sins are forgiven,” instead of taking down, naturally feeds the pride of his self-righteous heart. Witness the Pharisees of old.

To say, “that we are to be perfectly passive, to do “nothing, to feel no motion in our hearts; but to be “justified without any act, exercise or exertion in the “human mind,” does not indeed agree with scripture language, which calls upon us to *repent and be converted, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that our sins may be blotted out, and we be saved*; however it is not so disagreeable to the pride of an indolent, sluggish heart, dead in sin, but that it may pass. For if men can but get a hope they shall be saved, without being brought down to own that God’s character is as glorious, and their’s as odious, as the divine law supposes, and so without being necessitated to look to free grace through Jesus Christ, in that precise point of light, in which it is exhibited to view in the gospel, the life of Agag is saved; a proud, impenitent self-justifying, self-righteous spirit is unsubdued: and the native enmity of the heart against the divine character keeps it’s ground. And a carnal heart, under terror, can, in a strait, bear with any scheme, in which these points may be saved. But

to

to exalt God so high, and come down so low, as in the least degree to answer to the import of the divine law, and to the import of the cross of Christ, is so diametrically opposite to the temper of a carnal heart, which is at enmity against God, that nothing short of the regenerating influences of the holy spirit can effect it.

No conviction, from the spirit of God, the mind of a natural man, remaining such, is capable of, is sufficient to strike death to the root of a proud, self-righteous, self-justifying disposition. Great convictions of sin and guilt a natural man is capable of. Yea, it is possible the conscience of a natural man may be so awakened, as that he may know, may be quite certain, that there is not the least jot of goodness in his heart; yea, that he is dead, altogether dead in sin; and so has nothing in the world to make a righteousness of: whereby he may be driven to despair, totally to despair of mercy, from this quarter; yea, and his mouth be so stopped, as that he has not one word to say for himself: yet all this, how much soever it may knock down and stun a self-righteous spirit, does not in the least cure the mind of a self-righteous disposition. And nothing is wanting but materials to work upon, and the disposition will rise again, and live and reign as high as ever. Thus it is in some sinners who have had great legal convictions, upon, their receiving false comfort and getting false religious affections, they have been more proud after their supposed conversion than ever they were before; and more under the government of a self-righteous, self-justifying spirit. Proud when full of comfort; and when their good feelings are all gone, virtually laying all the blame to God, who, they say, is withdrawn from them, and they can do nothing of themselves; not once imagining that they are really criminal, infinitely criminal in the sight of God, for not *loving the Lord their God with all their hearts*, according to the first and great command of God's holy law. And hence it is always difficult, to convince a deluded sinner in proportion as his false comforts and joys have been great. Although in strict truth, there is no more grace in the heart of the devoutest Pharisee on earth, than in the vilest pyrate that ever failed

failed the seas. For it is true of every unregenerate man, that he is *at enmity against God*. Rom. viii. 7.

By the law, is the knowledge of sin; and by the law a natural man may see that he is a sinner in so complete a sense, as that he has nothing to make a righteousness of; and yet the self-righteous disposition may remain wholly unmortified. Thus in this sense, no doubt, Satan now knows, that he is a sinner; and in this sense, it is certain, Satan and all wicked beings will know, at the day of judgment, that they are sinners. However, the pride of Satan's heart is not mortified now, nor will the pride of Satan or any other wicked being be slain by the convictions they will receive at the day of judgment.

Nothing can effectually take down the heart, short of that light, in which the divine law and our own character is seen, through the regenerating influences of the holy spirit. If before regeneration *the commandment come, sin revive, and I die*, in a sort; yet all this is fore against the bias of the heart: but it is in regeneration, that *I through the law am cordially dead to the law, that I may live to God*.—For

A disposition to justify our selves, in not loving God with all our hearts, will it self actually die and cease to be, and the contrary disposition take place only in proportion as God appears to our souls worthy of our supreme love. It is this, and nothing short of this, which will incline us, from the heart, of our own accord, to take all the blame of our disaffection to the divine character home to our selves. And so while the divine law is viewed in the light of the divine glory, it will appear as it never did before, holy, just and good, a glorious law; and it will come to pass, as it is written; *I through the law am dead to the law, that I may live to God*.

THE damned will at the day of judgment have such a knowledge of God and of themselves, as will convince their consciences, that the law is just. (Rom. ii. 5. Jude 15.) Sore against their wills, they will be forced to own, that God ought to have been loved and obeyed; and that they deserve damnation for their disaffection and rebellion. But, being blind to the holy beauty of the

the divine nature, they will feel no inclination, no free, genuine, cordial disposition to take the blame of their disaffection and rebellion home to themselves. Their proud, self-justifying temper will remain unmortified, while they are conscience convinced that they are absolutely without excuse. They would be heartily glad to excuse themselves and lay the blame upon God, if they could. Their old disposition that way will be wholly alive: but their mouths will be stopped. And therefore they will blaspheme God, and be self-condemned, both at once. An amazing dreadful state!

BUT in regeneration, the sinner is brought to such a view of God, as an absolutely perfect, infinitely glorious and amiable being; and to such a view of the divine law as holy, just and good, a glorious law; as even begins to kill a self-righteous, self-justifying disposition in the bottom of the heart. And from the inmost soul the man begins to see, think, and feel that God is wholly right, and that he himself is wholly wrong; and so from the heart to give up every sin-extenuating, self-justifying plea, and cordially to take the whole blame to himself, and frankly to own the honest truth. *I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.*—*God be merciful to me a sinner.*

AND now, and not till now, will he begin to see that he needs *that kind of pardon* which the gospel offers. A pardon which supposes, that our disaffection to the Deity is entirely inexcusable, yea infinitely criminal. So very criminal that the blood of an incarnate God was necessary to make atonement for it, that consistent with the honour of the divine government, it might be forgiven.

AND now, and not till now, will he begin to see the atonement of Christ. For till now he will not begin to see his disaffection to the deity so very criminal, as to render such an atonement needful, in order to his being pardoned, consistent with the divine honour.

And as his sense of God, as an absolutely perfect, infinitely glorious and amiable being, increaseth; and his sense of the divine law as holy, just and good, a glorious law, honoured on the cross by the blood of an incarnate God;

God; and his sense of the inexcusableness and infinite evil of not loving God with all his heart; as a sense of these increases, his proud, self-righteous, self-justifying disposition will die; and his need of Christ and free grace appear, in a clearer and clearer light.—No man so sensible of his need of Christ and free grace, as the apostle *Paul*, who beyond doubt was the holiest of all mere men, that ever lived.—*I through the law am dead to the law, that I may live to God. I am crucified with Christ.*

SECTION

S E C T I O N X.

*The Nature and Consequences of spiritual Blindness:
and how the God of this World blinds the Minds of
them that believe not.*

WHEN it is said, that *Satan provoked or stirred up David to number Israel*, (1 Chron. xxi. 1.) it is not to be imagined, that the corruptions of his own heart did not move him to that deed. This was no doubt the true state of the case, (ver. 17.) and Satan only took advantage of those corruptions to set him on. So when it is said, that “the God of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;” no doubt, the corruptions of the human heart lie at the bottom of all that criminal blindness, which Satan endeavours to increase and strengthen by all ways in his power.

The question therefore comes to this, “what is there in the human heart, which renders men blind to the glory of the gospel.” Or in other words, “What is there in the heart of a fallen creature, which renders him blind to the beauty and glory of the divine nature, shining with so much brightness, in the gospel way of salvation through the blood of Christ?” For if man were not a fallen, depraved, vicious creature, he could not be blind to such beauty; a beauty which affects the hearts and engages the attention of all the angelic hosts, who have not that special concern in the affair which we have. They desire, earnestly desire to look into these things. 1 Pet. i. 12. and discern in them the manifold wisdom of God. Eph. iii. 10.

I. SPIRITUAL blindness consists primarily in the want of spiritual sight: or in not being sensible of the
love-

loveliness, beauty and glory of divine things, as they are in themselves. There is a natural beauty and glory in the natural world, in the sun, moon and stars, &c. which men see who are not naturally blind: so there is a holy, heavenly, divine beauty and glory in divine things, in God and christ, in the law and gospel, &c. which men see, who are not spiritually blind. The word *blindness*, which is applied to the mind, is borrowed from one of our external senses; and in its original signification, means a privation of sight. So it was with the man born blind. He was destitute of the sight of his eyes from his birth. But this outward blindness, although in several respects a great resemblance of inward spiritual blindness; as a blind man has no more idea of natural beauty, than one spiritually blind has of divine beauty; yet there is this *great essential difference between* the blindness of the eyes, and the spiritual blindness of the mind: viz. one is the nature of a *calamity simply*; the other is not only a calamity, but is also of a vicious nature, in its self properly a crime; as it is *seated chiefly in the heart*, and consists in being stupid to that divine beauty and loveliness, with which the mind ought to be itself deeply affected.——To have no relish for holy beauty, to have no heart to look upon holiness a lovely thing, is equivalent to having no heart to love the HOLY ONE of Israel, who is the God of glory; which beyond all doubt is criminal, and that in a very high degree.

WERE we acquainted with a man, who appeared to be without any spark of generosity or friendship in his heart, a man that cared not in the least for his neighbour's welfare or for the public good, and even without natural affection to his own offspring, no feeling to any interest but his own; common sense would teach us to look upon such a character as very vicious. And if he was *blind* to the wants of the poor, and *deaf* to their cries, we should look upon that *blindness* and *deafness* of a criminal nature. And the more blind and deaf, the more criminal should we pronounce the man. And by parity of reason, if we are blind to the loveliness of the most excellent Being in the universe, discovered in the clearest and brightest manner, it must, by all holy beings,

beings, by all good judges, be looked upon as being of the nature of a crime. If a hard-hearted man justifies himself in being blind to the distressing wants of the poor, every self-justifying plea, in the eyes of his benevolent neighbour, will render his character so much the more vile and odious. And if to be blind to the beauty of the divine nature, ever so clearly revealed, is no crime; then it is no crime not to love God: i. e. no crime to live in the breach of the first and great command, and no crime to be without that which is the chief foundation of all religion. And we may as well say, there is no crime in a total disregard to all being in general, and in being entirely under the government of selfish affections. Which is as absurd, as to say, that there is nothing in the system, worth the least regard, but ourselves.——And therefore in the language of scripture a *heart of stone*, that is, a blind, senseless, stupid heart, is one name given to a wicked ungodly heart. Because in scripture account, to be as blind, senseless and stupid to the glory of divine things as a stone, is of a criminal nature. A heart of stone is a wicked heart.

OUR blessed Saviour, by all he said and did, gave himself a character without a blemish, perfect in beauty. His disciples, who were but poor illiterate fishermen, *beheld his GLORY, as the glory of the only begotten son of God.* Others, who were gentlemen of good sense and a polite education, *wise and prudent*, were so far from discerning any *form or comeliness in him*, that they cried, *He is a Samaritan, and hath a devil; why hear ye him?* and therefore, as their blindness to the beauty of his character was not for want of natural abilities, or outward advantages, but owing entirely to the state of their minds, to the frame of their hearts; so it was altogether of a criminal nature. And they had *no cloke for their sin*, in our Saviour's judgement. To say they had some cloke, and were not altogether criminal in their blindness; is to say, there was some blemish in our Saviour's character: which is no better than downright infidelity.

II. SPIRITUAL blindness which originally consists in a want of relish for holy beauty, for that beauty which

is peculiar to holy beings and holy things, and is criminal considered as such; is capable of being greatly increased and confirmed through the exercise and influence of the various corruptions of a wicked heart, whereby it may become criminal in a still higher degree. And here *the God of this world* may have a great hand in blinding the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them.

THUS to a worldly heart, the devil may possibly present the glory of this world, the glory of riches, honours and pleasures in so strong a light, as quite to carry away the mind from all serious thoughts about God and Christ and a future state. *They say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* So that when the gospel is preached in all its glory, it shall not be able to gain the least regard; nay, not so much as to gain the least attention of the mind. And when sermon is over, like the generality of the Jews in Christ's day, *they make light of it and go their way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize.* By this means multitudes, if not by far the greater part of ungodly men, under the gospel, live and die, so inattentive to the gospel scheme, as never to gain any considerable acquaintance with it. They are too indifferent about the matter ever to get, what is called, a doctrinal knowledge of the christian religion.—So also the young and gay part of mankind, are eager in the pursuit of pastimes, merriments and sports, to the entire neglect of all divine things, while Satan is not wanting to do all he may to push them on, that they never attend to the glorious gospel of Christ.—And while mankind thus serve divers lusts and pleasures, and live in malice and envy besides, hateful and hating one another, the gospel is to them, like the seed, which fell by the way-side, all thrown away and lost.

But if by the various shocking calamities of this life, and the apparent certainty of death, or through the awakening influences of the holy spirit, or by any other means, wicked men are rendered attentive to the gospel revelation, and solicitous about their eternal interest; yet, if upon a nearer view of things, their native dislike

to God's holy law, takes occasion to arise and ferment, it may finally and forever keep them blind to the glory of the gospel of Christ. And all their study and pains may only lead them into that wilderness of secret scepticism, where many professed christians wander and are lost: not knowing what they are, nor where they are; nor what to believe, nor what to expect: but are at a total uncertainty about every thing themselves, and imagine it entirely owing to want of thought, that all mankind are not as much puzzled as they be. While others are driven by their prejudices against the divine law and glorious gospel into open infidelity, not in the least suspecting that the fault is in themselves. While others of just the same temper, through false and delusive joys, from a groundless persuasion of God's love to them, profess the greatest zeal for the gospel, which, at the same time, rightly understood, they disbelieve and hate with all their hearts.

IF a man begins to study the bible, he will soon find, that according to that book, all mankind are naturally under a law which requires perfect obedience on pain of eternal death; and that this law, by which all mankind stand guilty before God, is esteemed holy, just and good: and that it was in this view God gave his son to die in our stead; to be made a curse to redeem us from its curse.—But how blind must a man be to the wisdom of God in the death of his son, to whom the divine law appears so far deserving such high honour, as rather to be a blemish in the divine character, that ever God made it. And how shocked, stumbled and confounded, must such a man be at the cross of Christ?—unless some cunning way can be contrived to delude one's self.—“He died for me,” says one, “even for me in particular; and I verily believe I shall have life and salvation by him.” And thus all difficulties are solved in a moment. For if he is safe, he cares not how. If he is freed from the curse, he is content the law should be reputed holy, just and good. Although in any other view he cannot think of it, without hatred and heart risings. “He died to purchase an abatement of the law;” says another

Not considering that if the law was before, just what it ought to be, holy, just and good, it needed no abatement. And if the law was not so good as it might have been, the absolute perfection of the divine nature would have effectually moved the deity to bring it to be perfectly holy, just and good, nor was any mediator needed in the case.—“But surely,” says the benighted soul, whom the God of this world hath blinded, “if I do as well as I can, I shall be saved. For it cannot be just to require of me more than I can do, and then damn me for not doing.” O sinner, if you have an heart to do all, that in reason you ought to do, to recommend you to the divine favour, do it: and you shall live. But then remember, there is no occasion, that Christ should do any thing for you. You will have done enough for yourself. And so Christ is dead in vain, and christianity is overthrown.

“But,” says the sinner, and in what he says, he discovers how blind he is, how far from seeing the beauty of the divine nature as it shines in the law and gospel, and in all the divine dispensations toward mankind from the beginning, and how far from believing with all his heart and acquiescing with all his soul in the gospel way of salvation through the blood of Christ, how loth to take that blame to himself which belongs to him, and how ready to impute iniquity to his Maker.—“But, says the sinner, if no doings of mine will intitle me to life, if the law I am under requires more than I can do, and damns me for the least failing; then I am in an undone state in spite of my utmost efforts. And where is the justice of this? Or how is this consistent with the goodness of the divine nature? For God to bring me into a state of being worse than not to be, and then to hold himself unobliged to grant me any relief, at liberty to have mercy on whom he shall have mercy! O that I had never been born! or that I could now cease to be! O why has God thus dealt with me? Did I sin and fall in *Adam*? Nay, I never chose him to be my representative. It was he that eat the forbidden fruit and not I, and that thousands of years before I was
“born.

“born.”* So that it appears to him, that the whole of the divine conduct toward him has been hard, unjust and injurious. And Satan the God of this world delights to hold him bound down under this blindness, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may never shine into his heart ; but rather that as the Israelites provoked God to give them up by their murmurings ; (*Num. xiv.*) so it may come to pass in this case. And so he become more and more irritated against the divine Majesty ; ’till led by Satan, he may grow bold to catch hold of some false comfort, or to deny that there is any such God, or law, or gospel, and so get ease ; or otherwise sink down into despair, and an habitual blasphemous temper, in as near a resemblance of the devil as he can bring him ; who naturally desires that all intelligences may think as ill of God and of his government, as he himself does.—Or it may answer Satan’s ends in some cases perhaps as well, if he can lead one to believe, that God has altered his mind, has judged his law too severe, has given it up, has appointed his son to die, and by his death to establish a milder constitution, in which we are not obliged cordially to approve, the divine law with application to ourselves, and look only to free grace through Jesus Christ ; but allowed to look upon the law as too severe, and upon the gospel as designed in our favour, a remedy against that severity.—I say, this perhaps may answer the devil’s ends as well ; for on this scheme, God’s original and only law is given up as tyrannical ; and the gift of Christ to die, instead of doing honour to the law, is rather an acknowledgment that we had been hardly dealt with, and designed to make us amends, and do us justice. So God, just as the devil would have it, must have passed for a tyrant, had he not given up his law, and appointed his son to die for us, as it were by way of restitution, to make us amends and do us justice.—This is the character the devil, that avowed enemy to God, his law and government, would be glad to fix on the Almighty ; that his own expulsion out of heaven, for breach of

* See Mr. Edwards on *Original Sin*, for the solution of difficulties relative to that doctrine.

the divine law, might be universally look'd upon, as a cruel, tyrannical act, through all God's dominions ; and it come to be the general opinion, that God, in his case also, is obliged in justice to grant some relief. Nor can any thing suit the devil better, than to see christian divines grow zealous to prove, that his punishment, consistent with the divine perfections, cannot be eternal. Could he bring the whole system to be of this mind, and had he power sufficient on his side, we may easily guess, what a grand revolution he would soon make in the empire of the GREAT ETERNAL. He would treat God the father, as the Jews treated God the son, and from the same spirit. But the throne of the ALMIGHTY is established for ever and ever : God reigns, and will for ever reign : and blessed be his glorious name for ever. And let all that love him, say, AMEN.

IT is plain from scripture, that Satan, who was once an innocent being, and in a state of probation, and under a law which threatened eternal destruction to the breaker of it, and who for his sin was cast out of heaven and doomed to eternal woes, is now an avowed enemy to God and his government. And if we view him, as the God of this world, at the head of the powers of darkness, ruling in the children of disobedience, his attempts to dethrone God in the hearts of men, and set up himself in his stead, and his great success, may be seen in the universal ignorance of God, and wide spread of idolatry among all nations of the earth through a long succession of ages. Nor could the thunder of mount-Sinai prevent Israel from making a calf, nor all God's mighty works, nor the warnings and tears of his prophets keep idols out of the holy land ; but from time to time they were eager to adopt the gods and the religious worship of the heathen. And what that was the Apostle tells us. 1 Cor. x. 20. *The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God.*

SUCH was his enmity against the most high—and his hatred of the divine law and government is equally manifest, in all the methods he takes, to prejudice mankind against religion in general : and particularly, in
all

all the methods he takes, to propagate an ill idea of the divine law through the christian world ; that thereby the special design of Christ's death, to do honour to it, might not be attended to ; or if attended to, the glory of the design not be seen.

AND all this conduct of Satan may be easily accounted for.—For, if the divine law, which threatens eternal damnation to the transgressor, is holy, just and good, then the expulsion of Satan out of heaven for his sin, was a righteous act. If all mankind like Israel of old, who when the curse of the law was twelve times pronounced, twelve times answered AMEN ; I say, if all mankind should unite in a disposition understandingly to pronounce the divine law, holy, just and good, they would therein virtually, as with one voice, declare for God, and against satan. And the justice of his punishment, being thus universally acknowledged in this world, where he claims to be a god, would ungod him, and turn him into a devil, and put him to the utmost confusion. And would above all things tend to destroy his influence, and bring his kingdom to ruin ; and open a way for the glory, the transcendent glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ to be seen among mankind. The consequences of which would be dreadful to the cause of satan in the world.

For only think a moment, what the consequences must be.—If the law is holy, just and good, glorious and amiable, worthy to be magnified and made honourable—the devil is justly damned.—It was a glorious and praise-worthy act in the Almighty, a beauty in his character, for which he deserves to be forever loved and adored through his dominions, to doom him and his adherents to eternal woe.—A fallen sinful world too are justly doomed to death. It was a god-like, glorious deed.—An atonement of infinite value, to do honour to the law, and set sin in all its horrors, was needed ; that God might sit upon a throne of grace, and yet be just.—God's giving his son to die was a most glorious display of all the divine perfections.—Christ crucified, is the wisdom of God, and the power of God—Satan is a liar.—All those ill thoughts of God and of his ways, which

our wicked hearts are naturally inclined to suggest, and which Satan loves to foment, are false and blasphemous—and the holy scriptures are infallibly the word of God—and it is our duty and highest interest to repent and turn to God through Jesus Christ.—And if this should become the general sentiment, Satan would soon have no subjects left.—The holy scriptures, I say, are infallibly the word of God, once grant the law to be holy, just and good.—

No book but the bible sets God so high, brands sin with such eternal infamy, and so effectually secures the divine authority. And pray, who was the author of this book? Not Satan, I dare say, whose character stands condemned throughout, and who hates the whole genius and spirit of it with all his heart. Not wicked men, who cannot bear with it, although proved to be divine by mighty works and signs and wonders. Not good angels nor good men, who could have no motive thus to impose their own saying on mankind, as a revelation from heaven.—No being in the universe could be the author of the bible but God himself—that very law, which tempts a blind, wicked world to infidelity, is a full proof, that God, and none but God could be its author.

AND how void of any real weight, yea, how impious, to holy beings above, in whose eyes the divine character is without a blemish, perfect in beauty, must our grand objections to the divine law appear? “*I have no heart to love the Lord*, and therefore it ought not to be required of me.” Which if we would be honest, is the only objection against the divine law, we have to make in this apostate world: unless we will impiously say, “that he is not infinitely amiable in himself, *i. e.* is not an absolutely perfect being, *i. e.* is not God. And so does not deserve such supreme respect at our hands. For it is contrary to common sense to say, that it is difficult to love a perfectly amiable character, which perfectly suits our hearts. And it is a dictate to common sense, that the more amiable a being is, the greater is our obligation to love him, and the greater our blame if we do not. And so if God is infinitely lovely, our obligation, and consequently our
blame,

blame, must be infinitely great. And so the penalty of the law is exactly what it ought to be.

“BUT we have lost our power to love God by the fall, and it is a dictate of common sense, that it is not just to require more of us than we can do.”—Pray, what power have we lost? Wicked men have no heart to love God, I grant. This is that, in which their wickedness consists, they would not be wicked men were it not for this. But had they an heart to love him, it would be an easy, sweet, delightful thing. We never complain of want of power to love the world. 'Tis easy to love the world. And why? Because the world is really more lovely than God? No, rather because we have an heart to love the world, but no heart to love God. The world suits our hearts, but God does not. Now, can our having no heart to love God, free us from our obligation, or lessen our blame? I appeal to common sense. Am I a father; I expect my child will love, honour and obey me. Am I a master; I expect to be regarded as such. Should my child, should my servant, plead and say, “I have no heart,” I should judge him to blame and worthy of punishment for that very thing. *Mal. i. 6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if I then be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts.*—Or shall we say, *The worse men grow, the less to blame they be.* A maxim, the devil himself cannot but know to be false, how glad soever he might be, for the sake of his own character, to have it pass for true.—Besides, this is the scripture account of the matter. For,

WHEN God of old required the Israelites to love him with all their hearts, and serve him with all their souls; and they appeared so forward to engage it; God, who fully knew what they were, and the only difficulty there was in the way of their yielding an entire obedience to his law, breaks out in this very expressive language, Deut. v. 28, 29. *I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken: O THAT THERE WERE SUCH AN HEART IN THEM.* As if he had said, “then there would be no difficulty: and

their promises might be trusted." But as the Psalmist declares, Psal. lxxviii. 37. "Their heart was not right with him: neither were they stedfast in his covenant." And again, Psal. lxxx. 11, 12. "My people WOULD NOT hearken to my voice; and "Israel would none of me: so I gave them up."—In a word,

THE fault is in our hearts, or the divine character; for it can be no where else—to say, the fault is not in us; is to say, that it is in God. To say, that our blindness to the divine glory is not criminal; is to say, that there is no glory in the divine nature. And whatever we plead for our justification, is implicitly to God's condemnation. For it is a plain case, that the Jews could alledge nothing to justify their disrespect to the character of Jesus Christ, but what would be of the nature of a reflection upon that character. For if his character was good and amiable, they were to blame in not being struck with its beauty.

To say, that we are *dead in sin*, by way of excuse; is to say, that sin is not sin. For if sin is sin; then to be *dead in sin*, is the greater sin. That is, to be *rebolly under the power of sin, is more criminal than to be but partly under its power*. Otherwise sin is no more sin. For if the more sinful we be, the less to blame we are, then sin is no more sin. It has changed its nature, and become an innocent thing.

LET the matter be strictly examined, and it will be found, that *spiritual blindness*, which has been thought rather a calamity than a vice, is really as much of a criminal nature, as any kind of sin we can think of. It contains in it all kinds of wickedness in embryo. It is itself, an aversion to all good. Its seat is in the heart. It is not owing to the smallness of our natural capacities; for Satan, who is a being of great abilities, and of a fine genius, is as blind to the beauty of divine things, as the most stupid sinner in the world. It is not owing to the want of external instruction, for Judas had as much of that, as Peter. It is not owing to the terrors of the law and the fears of hell, and doubting of the love of God; for the Pharisees, who were in full expectation of eternal glory, were but the blinder for

for it. No : rather it is the *very spirit of an apostate creature, to be blind to the beauty of the divine nature.* It is the beginning of our disaffection to God, and it increases as our disaffection increases. It is the darkness of the prince of darkness, of the same nature with his blindness. It is that which gives the prince of darkness his chief power over us, to make us think and feel and act as he would have us. It is that which constitutes us members of the kingdom of darkness, and prepares us voluntarily and of free choice to walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air. It makes us full proof against the clearest external manifestations which can be made of the divine glory. Having eyes, we see not ; and having ears, we hear not ; neither do we understand : although the glories of the God of glory shine all around us, in all his works, and in all his ways ; even so, that in the view of the inhabitants of heaven, *the whole earth is full of his glory.*

To say, that spiritual blindness is no crime, is in effect to affirm, that there is no beauty in the divine nature. Which to assert, is subversive of all religion, natural and revealed.

To acknowledge, that spiritual blindness is a crime, is to own it to be a breach of that law, which requires us to love God with all our hearts, on pain of eternal woe. It is therefore to own it to be a crime infinitely blame-worthy, and for which the eternal pains of hell are justly due ; for every breach of that law is such. And this, beyond all doubt, is the very truth of the case.

BUT if spiritual blindness be thus criminal, no mercy can be expected from God, in the case, on the foot of the law. So far from it, that if he deals with us merely according to strict justice, and renders to us according to our desert, he must punish us with eternal damnation for it. So far, so very far, is God from being obliged to grant us the enlightening influences of his holy spirit. As the gift of his son, to be a redeemer, was an act of the freest grace to a revolted guilty world ; so the gift of his spirit, to be an enlightener, is an act of grace equally free. He passed by the sinning

angels, and did not give his son to die for them ; and he is at liberty among the sons of men, to pass by whom he pleases, as to the gift of his spirit. And in this affair, he actually doth *have mercy, on whom he will have mercy. The elect obtain, and the rest are blinded.* And his conduct is plainly vindicable, once granting, that our blindness is our sin ; and that God might justly have held all mankind bound by law, and never provided relief of any kind. And if we affirm, that God could not justly have held all mankind bound by law, but was obliged to provide relief, the whole gospel, which claims to be of mere grace, is overthrown. We must, then, own the law to be good, and our blindness to be our crime, and God at liberty to relieve us or not, according to the good pleasure of his will, or turn infidels.—Or, which is as bad, be inconsistent, and so self-condemned, as hereticks, after two admonitions, were wont to be, in the apostolic age.

S E C T I O N XI.

The Nature of Divine Illumination.

AS the gospel is *bid to them that are lost*; and as all, who *believe not*, are *blind* to its glories; so on the other hand, all true saints see its glory. "The light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God, shines unto them. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines in their hearts. And beholding the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." Thus the matter is expressed in the unerring oracles of truth. But—what is the glory seen?—how is it seen?—what is the nature of the sight?—and why is it represented to be peculiar to the saved?—and wherein does it differ from what unregenerate men may experience?

I. THE glory seen is DIVINE GLORY. It is the beauty and amiableness of God's moral character, on the account of which, the deity is infinitely lovely in himself. It is the glory of God's moral perfections, which renders him the supreme delight of angels and saints. The apostle expressly calls it, *The glory of the Lord*. And again, *the glory of God*. It is the very glory and beauty of the divine nature itself: a glory as peculiar to God, as his own divinity is. Yea, it is the brightness of the very divinity itself. So that, he who hath seen this glory, hath, in the language of scripture, *seen God*, *Matth. v. 8.* and *known God*. *John xvii. 3.* *John ii. 4.* and consequently is able to distinguish between the true God, and all other beings, real or imaginary: as he, who hath seen the natural sun, can distinguish it from a glow-worm. In reference to this

therefore all true saints are spoken of in scripture, as having *an unction from the holy One, whereby they know all things.* 1 John ii. 20. because he who rightly sees God, as he has manifested himself in the gospel, does virtually know the whole of christianity; yea, the whole of divine revelation. And therefore it is added by the apostle, ver. 27. “And ye need not that any man teach you, but the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie.” And on this account, it is represented, as impossible, that such should be seduced by the most artful hereticks, to imbrute, that false idea of God, which is the spirit, life and soul of all their false schemes of religion. For as this anointing *hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* And therefore it is represented, as being *impossible the elect should be deceived.* Math. xxiv. 24, while on the other hand, it is declared, that *all that dwell upon the earth shall worship the beast, whose names are not written in the lamb’s book of life,* Rev. xiii. 8.—Thus the glory seen is the brightness, beauty, amiableness of God’s true and real character as exhibited to view on the cross of Christ.*—But

II. How is this glory seen?—This sight of the glory of God is no abstract metaphysical idea, hatched in the fancy of philosophic, speculative men: far from it. *Not many wise men, not many learned, says the apostle, but the foolish things of this world, hath be called.* Nor

* What that character of God is, which is exhibited to view on the cross of Christ, and what is implied in its being glorious, has been already shewn—God our creator was in himself infinitely worthy of our supreme love; and so his law which required this on pain of eternal death, was a glorious law; and so it was a glorious thing in God to give his Son to die to do it honour, *to declare his righteousness that he might be just, and yet justify him that believeth in Jesus.* And therefore to see the glory of God in the face of Christ, implies a sight of the glory of God, as creator and law giver, and of the glory of his law: for Christ on the cross dying to do honour to the law is glorious, only on supposition the law was a glorious law, and worthy of this honour: as has been already proved. These things are hinted now, that they may be kept constantly in the reader’s view—because there are false Christs, and false gospels, and false glories, with which multitudes are deluded.

is it any thing irrational and visionary, the fruit of the teaming imagination of melancholy souls. No, it is perfectly rational, and divinely noble. It is not seen by the eyes of the body, nor is it seen by the imagination, nor is it seen by the force of a penetrating genius. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in Heaven.* It is often *hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes.* A poor illiterate fisherman, divinely enlightened, might see it, with as much ease, as he could behold the glory of the sun shining in its strength. All true saints, in the apostolic age, saw this divine glory, how mean soever their birth, how low soever their genius, as St. Paul affirms. *We All with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.*

BUT how did they see it?—Pray, tell me—how is the beauty of any character seen among men? —Universal experience teaches us, that characters *appear agreeable, or disagreeable, just as they suit our taste, or not.* To an angel, who has a taste for holy beauty, God's moral character appears infinitely amiable; but to the devil, who is a being of a contrary taste, God's moral character appears just the reverse. To the Pharisees, no character more odious, than that of Jesus Christ; but at the same time, Martha, Mary and Lazarus, were charmed with this man. To the Jewish nation, in general, who groaned under the Roman yoke, and longed for a Messiah to set them at liberty, to make them victorious, rich and honourable; a Messiah in the character of a temporal prince, even such an one as they expected, would have suited their hearts to perfection, and so have naturally appeared, a glorious Messiah. And the news of his coming, of his victories, and of his rising, spreading kingdom, would have been glorious news. Such a gospel would have been received among them as a glorious gospel; there would have been no vail on their hearts; none would have been blind to its beauties; nor would its glories have been hid from any: but rather, the carnal Jews in a body beholding in this Messiah the greatest worldly glory, would have been changed into the same image, had every answerable affection excited in their hearts. Had he thus
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come to his own, his own would have received him with all their hearts, joyfully inlisted under his banner, and followed him to battles, to victories, to universal empire, the very thing their hearts desired. But at the same time, a Messiah of such a character as this would have charmed them, the character of Jesus of Nazareth, shocked them to the last degree. "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that are called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Thus differently, to persons of different states, did the same character appear, for the carnal mind favours earthly things, but the spiritual mind the things which be of God. For *that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.* In regeneration there is a new, divine, holy taste and relish begotten in the heart, by the immediate influences of the spirit of God. And thus God *opens our eyes*; and thus God *shines in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Or, as the same thing is expressed in different language, thus God gives them *an heart to know the Lord*, and thus he *circumcises their hearts to love the Lord*; gives them *eyes to see, and ears to hear, and an heart to understand.*—For

SPIRITUAL blindness is not owing to the want of a penetrating genius, or to want of doctrinal knowledge; for the devil hath both these to a great degree, but still is as blind to the beauty of the divine nature, as the most ignorant Hottentot in *Africa*. For the moral character of the deity is, above all things in the universe contrary to the habitual temper of his heart. But that cannot appear lovely to us, which every bias of our hearts inclines us to hate. But heaven has declared, that the *carnal mind is enmity against God*. And the same divine revelation hath, in perfect consistence, as expressly declared, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But, in order to discern spiritually, the man himself must become spiritual. That is, be born of the spirit, *for that which*
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is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.—And if Nicodemus said, *how can these things be?* Yet, that was so far from a solid objection against the truth, that it was rather, an illustration of it.

THAT the idea of a natural beauty supposes an internal sense implanted by our creator, by which the mind is capacitated to discern such kind of beauty, is clearly illustrated and proved, by a late ingenious philosopher.* And that the idea of spiritual beauty supposes an internal spiritual sense, communicated to the soul by the spirit of God, in the work of the new creation, is also as clearly illustrated and proved, by a late divine, whose praise is all the churches.† It is needless therefore at present to enter farther into this subject.

III. As to the special nature of this kind of knowledge, which the apostle calls *the knowledge of the glory of God*, it is different from every species of knowledge in the universe, not only, as it is, in a peculiar sense, of divine original; but also, as it is, in itself, of a divine and holy nature. To see the holy beauty of God's moral character, to see the beauty of holiness, to have holiness appear beautiful and seem lovely to the soul, is of the same nature as to love holiness; but to love holiness, is holiness itself. Among the peculiar people of God, of old, they had *an holy anointing oil*, with which they anointed, and by which they sanctified their tabernacle, altar, priests, &c. *Exod. xl.* This was the type; the antitype of which the apostle thus expresses, in the forecited text, as that which is common to all true saints, who are spiritual priests, consecrated to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. *1 John ii. 20. Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. ver. 27. The anointing teacheth you all things.* And perhaps the same thing is referred to in *Rev. iii. 18. Anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayst see.* It is an unction from the Holy One, an holy anointing, an holy calling. In the same degree that God appears lovely to the soul, in the

* Mr. Hutchinson on beauty and virtue, p. 8—15.

† Mr. Edwards, on religious affections, p. 158—166.

same degree is he actually loved. The exercise of love is always in proportion to the degree of our sense of the divine beauty. For *beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image.* The affections are excited, are answerable to the views.* A sense of the divine loveliness, if we may so speak, is love in embryo: esteem of, delight and complaisance in the moral character of the deity, is love in internal exercise; a life devoted to his service, to advance his honour and interest in the world, is love operating in good works. And *then are ye my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* But each of these are plainly of the same nature, holy and divine. And each are equally enjoined as matter of duty in that first and great command, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* Therefore we are by God himself thus called upon, "Circumcise your selves to the Lord" and take away the foreskins of your hearts. *Jer. iv. 9.* And again, "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit. *Ezek. xviii. 31.*

FOR, it is the duty of all to whom the gospel comes, to look upon it, as a glorious gospel, and to have their hearts charmed with its beauty. To be blind to its glory is criminal, as it was before shewn; and to see its glory is for the same reason, a duty. And therefore all who are blind to the glory of the gospel, and so disbelieve and reject it, are expressly threatned with eternal damnation. But such an infinite punishment

* And by the way, this may shew the difference between a rational conviction that God is lovely, and a sense of his loveliness. A man may from rational arguments be convinced in his conscience, that God is lovely; and yet have no sense of his loveliness in his heart, nor any love to him. Satan knew in his conscience, that the holy character which God gave of *Job, there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man,* was an amiable character; but this character was so far from exciting love, that it excited envy and hatred in his heart. He wished to be able to prove *Job* an hypocrite, i.e. that all his love to God, arose merely from self love. *Doth Job fear God for nought.* So a wicked man may be convinced in his conscience, that God is an amiable being; and yet be so wicked, as that he cannot bear to think, that any saint on earth loves God for his own loveliness. And the reason may be learnt from *1 Joh. iii. 12.*

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supposes the crime to be infinitely great. The infinite greatness of the crime supposes we are under infinite obligations to the contrary. That is, under infinite obligations to look upon the gospel as glorious, and cordially believe and embrace it. And indeed its own intrinsic infinite beauty lays us under infinite obligations; and not to esteem what is so infinitely worthy of our esteem, must be infinitely criminal.

To say, that it is not our duty to look upon the gospel of Christ as a glorious gospel; that is, to look upon the divine perfections therein so clearly manifested, as glorious; is to say, that we are not obliged to look upon God himself, as a glorious being, when set in the clearest light before our minds. Which is, in effect, to say, that it is not our duty to love God. Which is to give up natural and revealed religion both at once. And to pronounce the deepest depravity, perfectly innocent.

HAD mankind, to whom the gospel comes, a genuine relish for holy beauty, a taste for the beauty of God's true character, they would naturally discern the glory of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. If they knew God the Father, they could not fail to know his son. Had mankind as high a relish for divine glory, as they have for the glory of this world; the glory of the gospel would strike the mind as naturally as the glory of an earthly kingdom now does.

HAD the Jews, for instance, had as high a taste for a spiritual Messiah, as they had for a temporal one, Christ crucified would as naturally have appeared glorious, as their expected Messiah, a temporal prince, was wont to do, in their fond imaginations. We have *no inability to know and love God and Jesus Christ, but what is altogether of a criminal nature.* And therefore our Saviour's conduct may be vindicated, in pronouncing such a heavy woe, on the inhabitants of *Corazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum*, because they repented not. For if the fault is wholly in us, it is no doubt increased, as our external advantages are increased.—But

IV. WHY is this kind of knowledge, of which we are speaking, constantly represented in scripture, as peculiar.

culiar to *the saved*, (1 Cor. i. 18.) to *the called*, (ver. 24.) to *the spiritual*, (Chap. ii. 14.) to *the changed*, (2 Cor. iii. 18.) to those who *believe*, (Chap. iv. 4.) to those who *love God and keep his commands*, (1 John ii. 4.) and who have *eternal life*, (John xvii. 3.) and why is it affirmed, that *whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, nor known him?* (1 John iii. 6.) and that, *he that doth evil, hath not seen God?* 3 John 2.) and of every natural man without exception, *neither can he know them?* (1 Cor. ii. 14.)—It is, in a word, because it implies a contradiction that it should be otherwise. For this kind of knowledge and its effects, are necessarily connected. And this kind of knowledge cannot exist in an unregenerate mind. For, to use the language of scripture, that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and the carnal mind is enmity against God. And what fellowship hath light with darkness? or what concord is there between sin and holiness? or what agreement between a carnal heart, and that character which it is at enmity against? Our Saviour judged it implied the greatest absurdity, that Satan should cast out Satan, that is, that Satan should be against himself. But it is plainly
 “an absurdity, equally great, to suppose, that two in-
 “telligent beings, of characters as diametrically oppo-
 “site as sin and holiness, should relish each others cha-
 “racter’s, and appear amiable in each others eyes.”
 Once granting that fallen man is totally dead in sin, destitute of the least spark of spiritual life, of the least remainder of a divine relish, or in the words of the apostle, that *the carnal mind is enmity against God*; (and by the *carnal mind* he declares himself to mean every man who is destitute of the spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 7, 8, 9.) I say, once granting this, and it is certain, and is even capable of strict demonstration, from the nature of things, that a sense of the amiableness of God’s true and real character, must of necessity be peculiar to the regenerate. False notions of God may ravish an unregenerate heart, but his true character every such heart is in fact at enmity against. Hence the gospel will be hid from all natural men, be they Jews or Greeks, however wise, however prudent, however penetrating, and however well instructed; and that even

even while sitting under the ministry of Christ himself, who spake as never man spake; and notwithstanding all the preaching of his inspired apostles. Thus the scriptures affirm that, in fact, it proved. And thus, the reason of the thing, shews, it must for ever prove.

"It implies a contradiction to suppose the human heart should be charmed with a character just opposite to its own." And nothing can be plainer than that the character of the holy One of Israel is diametrically opposite to the temper of one who is quite dead in sin. The divine character, therefore, must be altered in our imagination, or we, in fact, be born again, or God can never appear to us an amiable being. If we suppose God's character altered and accommodated to our taste, we may be charmed with the fiction, dead in sin as we are. But the clearer view a carnal man hath of the truth, the more certain will he be, that the love of God is not in him. *Rom. vii. 8, 9.*

It is true, many a carnal man is ravished to think, that God loves him, and will save him; but in this case, it is not the true character of God which charms the heart. It is not God that is loved. Strictly speaking, he only loves himself. And self-love is the source of all his affections. Or if we call it love to God; it is of no other kind than sinners feel to one another. *For sinners love those that love them.* The carnal Israelites, who gave the fullest proof of their disaffection to the divine character, as exhibited by God himself before their eyes, yet were once full of this kind of love at the side of the Red Sea. Our being ravished ever so much in a belief God loves us, is no sign that God's true character would suit our taste, had we right notions of it. The hypocritical Galatians loved *Paul* while they considered him, as the instrument of their conversion and means of their salvation; but on further acquaintance with the man, they turned his enemies, for his character rightly understood did not suit their taste.

If God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, if he cannot look on sin but with infinite detestation, if all those views, affections, thoughts, words, and actions, which are sweet to the taste of a carnal heart, are so
infi-

infinitely odious in the eyes of God, as to appear to him worthy of the eternal pains of Hell, as is in fact the case; (*Gal. iii. 10.*) 'tis as impossible that a carnal heart should see a beauty in the divine character, as that it should view its own character as being infinitely odious. For one implies the other. If it is beautiful in God to be affected toward my character, as in fact he is, my character must be infinitely odious: Nor can I at any time from the heart look upon God as a lovely being, without looking upon myself as infinitely hateful. For that being, whose nature it is, to look upon me as infinitely odious, is not lovely, unless I am in fact infinitely odious.—When our Saviour, speaking to the Pharisees, said, *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* these words determined his character in their eyes. And it implies a contradiction, to suppose, that Christ's character might have appeared lovely to them, without their own appearing odious, answerable to the import of his words. But there was nothing in a Pharisee's heart to lead him to look upon his own character in such an odious light. And therefore all our Saviour's declarations, and all his miracles, did but exasperate them. The more they knew of Christ, the more they hated him. As it was natural to them to approve of their own character, so it was natural to condemn his. For if the fault was not in them, it was in him. To say, it was not in him, was to own, that they were *serpents, and a generation of vipers, worthy of eternal destruction*. To look upon him as altogether lovely, was to look upon themselves as infinitely odious. But this was diametrically opposite to every bias in their hearts. Their old heart, therefore, must be taken away, and a new heart be given them, or they could never view things in this light. And thus our Saviour understood the matter. And therefore, on a time, speaking to a Pharisee, he said, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*—But

V. WHEREIN does this peculiar knowledge of God differ, from what natural men have actually had? or might have?—if they may have *all knowledge and understand all mysteries*, so as to speak as it were with “the tongues of men and angels: (*1 Cor. xiii.*)” if they

they may be "enlightened and taste the heavenly gift:" (*Heb.* vi.) if they may "receive the word with joy:" (*Mat.* xiii.) if they may "escape the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:" (*2 Pet.* ii. 20.) if they may have such a ravishing sense of the divine goodness, as the Israelites had at the Red Sea; and such an affecting sense of his majesty, greatness, power, holiness and justice, as they had at Mount Sinai, when they stood trembling before the mountain, and were so ready to promise, "whatsoever the Lord our God shall command, that will we do, and be obedient;" and such an high and heart-abasing sense of "the most high God, who liveth for ever," as *Nebuchadnezzar* had when he praised and extolled and honoured the king of heaven "all whose works are truth; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase," (*Dan.* iv. 34—37.)—if they may have all this, what is it they cannot have?—I answer, in one word, the holy beauty of God's real moral character, this is what they never had the least idea of. The most enlightened, affected, the devoutest natural man, that ever lived, as to this, is as blind, as the most ignorant stupid sinner in the world.—That this is, in fact, the case, is evident from this that all who *behold the glory of God* are actually *changed into the same image*. Which was not the case with the wicked Israelites, nor with *Nebuchadnezzar*, nor with the stony ground hearers, nor with those in *1 Cor.* xiii. *Heb.* vi. *2 Pet.* ii.

But as the nature of divine illuminations is so largely and accurately stated in *Mr. Edwards Treatise on religious affections*; and his sermon on *Jam.* ii. 19. I shall refer the reader to these pieces; and proceed

SECTION XII.

The Effects of Divine Illumination.

A View of all the moral perfections of GOD, shining in their brightest glory in the gospel way of saving sinners, exhibits to the mind, an evidence of the truth of the gospel, entirely new, which never struck the mind before. An evidence of such a nature, as removes all those natural prejudices against the truth, which tended to keep the mind in suspense, notwithstanding all the external proofs from the miracles, prophecies, &c. and an evidence, in it's own nature, the most convincing, and satisfying; and whereby the whole heart is gained, and brought over to a full and thorough belief of the gospel. So that now, and not till now, is the gospel believed to be true *with all the heart*; so as to induce us to *sell all* for the pearl of great price, and from the heart to deny our selves, take up our cross and follow Christ; venturing our all for time and eternity, upon the truth of his messiahship, of his divine mission, and of the news which he has brought to our ears.

WHEN the gospel, which is hid from all natural men, comes to be *revealed*, internally revealed to us by the holy spirit, in all its divine glories, agreeable to *Mat. xi. 25, 2 Cor. iii 18 Chap iv. 6. &c.* it is known to be from God, from the divinity of it's nature. For it appears to be, what the apostle's words import, *the GLORIOUS gospel of Christ, WHO IS the IMAGE OF GOD 2 Cor. iv. 4.* And, to use the words of a late writer, " He that truly
 " sees the divine, transcendent, supreme glory of those
 " things which are divine, does as it were know their
 " divinity intuitively; he not only argues, that they are
 " divine, but he sees that they are divine; he sees that
 " in them, wherein divinity chiefly consists: For in this
 " glory, which is so vastly and inexpressibly distinguished
 " from all other glory, does mainly consist the true
 " notion

“ notion of divinity: God is God, and distinguished
“ from all other beings, and exalted above them, chiefly
“ by his divinity. They therefore that see the stamp of
“ this divine glory in divine things, they see divinity in
“ them, they see God in them, and so see them to be de-
“ vine; because they see that in them wherein the truest
“ idea of divinity does consist.” He therefore who sees
the glory of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the
IMAGE of God, must know Jesus to be the son of God,
and his gospel to be divine. For he must be the son of
him whose image he bears, and that gospel must be from
God, which is, in it’s own nature, so Godlike.—Besides
as the same author adds,

“ THIS sense of the spiritual excellency and beauty of
“ divine things, does also tend directly to convince the
“ mind of the truth of the gospel, as there are very many
“ of the most important things declared in the gospel,
“ that are hid from the eyes of natural men, the truth
“ of which does in effect consist in this excellency, or
“ does so immediately depend upon it and result from
“ it; that in this excellency’s being seen, the truth of
“ those things is seen. As soon as ever the eyes are
“ opened to behold the holy beauty and amiableness
“ that is in divine things, a multitude of most important
“ doctrines of the gospel, that depend upon it, (which
“ all appear strange and dark to natural men) are at
“ once seen to be true. As for instance—men by see-
“ ing the true excellency of holiness, do see the glory of
“ all those things which reason and scripture shew to be
“ in the divine being. And hereby they see the truth
“ of all that the scripture declares concerning God’s
“ glorious excellency and majesty, his being the foun-
“ tain of all good, the only happiness of the creature,
“ &c. and this again, shews the mind the truth of what
“ the scripture teaches concerning the evil of sin against
“ so glorious a God; and also what the scripture teaches
“ concerning sin’s just desert of that dreadful punishment
“ which it reveals; and also concerning the impossibi-
“ lity of our offering any satisfaction or sufficient atone-
“ ment for that which is infinitely evil and heinous.
“ And this again shews the truth of what the gospel re-
“ veals concerning the necessity of a saviour, to offer an
“ atonement

“atonement of infinite value for sin. And this sense of
 “spiritual beauty enables the soul to see the glory of
 “those things which the gospel reveals concerning the
 “person of Christ; and so enables to see the exceeding
 “beauty and dignity of his person, appearing in what
 “the gospel exhibits of his word, works, acts and life:
 “and this apprehension of the superlative dignity of his
 “person, shews the truth of what the gospel declares
 “concerning the value of his blood and righteousness,
 “and so the infinite excellency of that offering he has
 “made to God for us, and so its sufficiency to atone
 “for our sins, and recommend us to God. And thus
 “the spirit of God discovers the way of salvation by
 “Christ, &c.—The truth of all these things appears
 “to the soul only by the imparting that spiritual taste
 “of divine beauty which has been spoken of. They
 “being hidden things to the soul before.” Thus for
 this author, who has handled this subject at large, and
 with greater accuracy than I have seen it done by any
 other writer. *

AND agreeable to these sentiments, it was an openly
 avowed maxim in the apostolic age, that “whosoever
 “believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.
 1 Joh. v. 1. and they every where publicly declared,
 “that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord
 “Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised
 “him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,” Rom. x. 9.
 They promised salvation to every man, who with all
 his heart believed the gospel to be true, and threatened
 damnation to none but infidels, according to their
 master’s commission, Mar. xvi. 15, 16. “Go ye into
 “all the world, and preach the gospel to every crea-
 “ture. He that believeth and is baptized shall be
 “saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 Not that they imagined, that every one who professed
 to believe the gospel with all his heart, really did so.
 They knew there might be a partial and ineffectual con-
 viction of the truth. They well remembered how
Judas heard all Christ’s discourses, and saw all his mi-
 racles, and professed to believe as well as *Peter*, and
 how he turned out in the end. And they well knew,

* *Mr. Edwards, on Religious Affections*, p. 182—199.

that as both were under equal external advantages, to see all the external evidences of Christ's divine mission; so that peculiar kind of faith, which *Peter* had, was entirely the result of divine illumination, as their master had in his life-time expressly declared. "Flesh and blood" hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which "is in Heaven, *Matt. xvii. 17.* and this kind of faith, they called, *believing with all the heart*, and asserted it to be peculiar to the regenerate, and infallibly connected with eternal life. A faith, in its own nature, specifically different from the faith of devils, and of wicked men, who are all equally blind to the glory of the moral perfections of the deity shining so brightly in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

AND now, when the gospel is *understood*, seen in its glory, and believed *with all the heart*, it immediately begets every answerable affection in the soul. For we are *begotten through the gospel. 1 Cor. iv. 15. begotten by the word of truth. Jam. i. 18. Sanctified by the truth. John xvii. 17.* and particularly "are begotten" ten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ "from the dead. *1 Pet. i. 3.* while the glory of the gospel is *hid*, it produces none of these effects upon the soul. "For if our gospel is hid, it is hid to them "that are lost." *2 Cor. iv. 3.* But when we *KNOW the truth, the truth makes us free. John viii. 32.* Or in the language of *St. Paul.* "We all with open face "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are "changed into the same image.*"

SOME-

* Some of the above texts are alledged by some writers to prove, that a belief that Christ died for me in particular, that my sins are pardoned, and that I shall be saved, begets every christian grace. And this is all the regeneration they allow of—But in this case, we are begotten, not by the *truth*, not by the *gospel*; for not one of these particulars are therein revealed. Yea, a man may be full of religious affections from such a belief, and yet at the same time look upon the gospel of Christ as "jargon"—"hideous jargon,"—Yea, 'tis a lie, which begets these affections, viz. *That God hath forgiven the sins of an impenitent sinner.* And therefore, not the *God of truth*, but the *father of lies* is the author of this kind of regeneration.

SOMETIMES, in the scripture, the effect produced by the knowledge of the *truth* is considered and spoken of as one thing, and every holy affection is summed up under one comprehensive name. As, "the image of God, the law written in the heart, Christ formed in the soul, coming to God by Christ, reconciliation to God, through Christ, &c."—At other times, there are a great variety of names used to mark out the various affections excited in the mind by the knowledge of the truth: the various affections toward God, and toward Christ, and toward the children of God, and towards mankind in general, and toward relatives, husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, &c. and toward enemies, and toward sin, and toward ourselves considered as sinners, and toward the things of this world, and of the world to come, &c. all which are the native result of the knowledge of the truth.

WHEN *Moses* came down from the mount, where for a long time he had conversed with the God of Israel, who manifested himself by a visible glory to him, he brought down the image of this visible glory with him; his face shone. He put a *veil* on his face, to hide the bright lustre thereof, from the eyes of the congregation, who were not able to behold. So a veil was on the hearts of the unbelieving Jews in the apostolic age. The glory of the gospel was hid by this *veil* from them, even from *all* that were *lost*.—But *we ALL with open, with unveiled, face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are*, says the apostle, in allusion to the face of *Moses*, *changed into the same image*: into a holy, divine, a glorious frame of heart, resembling the glory we behold.

CHANGED into the *same image*—The image of what?—of the moral perfections of the divine nature.—

neration. And this is one of his stratagems to *blind the minds of them that believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. Thus he transforms himself into an angel of light, to delude poor sinners with false hopes and false joys; to the end they may never know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; and so never have eternal life. See Mr. Cudworth's *Further Defence*.

Doth

Doth God view himself so worthy, so infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and universal obedience, as infinitely good and merciful as he is, yet sedately to judge, that the least defect in us deserves eternal woe; and that it does not become him, as the judge of all the earth, in any one instance ever to grant a pardon but through the mediation of his own son, and on the sole account of his righteousness and atonement? the divine enlightened soul has the same views, in kind, and an answerable frame of heart. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest; for destruction is my due, and hell my proper home. And should strict justice take place, all heaven ought for ever to love and adore the infinitely glorious majesty, crying, *Amen Hallelujah*. Yea, so bad am I, that any thing better than eternal damnation is too good for me. It is even unmeet such villainess should be passed over by the righteous governor of the world without a testimony of his infinite abhorrence. There could be no hope in my case were it not for the mediation, merits and atonement of the son of God. It could not have been just and right, to have pardoned such a wretch, had not he been set forth to be a propitiation. But now *God can be just*. Therefore to free grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, I look. Here is all my hope. And I give myself up to God through the great mediator, to love him and be for ever his: esteeming it the fittest thing in the world for ever to live to his glory, and the happiest thing to delight in him as the supreme good. *Whom have I in beaven-but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee.*" And thus they are changed into the same image. And thus God accomplishes his word, *I will write my law in their hearts.*

THE law written in the heart.——This is another name given to the same thing, for the law is a transcript of the divine nature, the very image of God. As the law was written, in indelible characters, on tables of stone, by the finger of God, of old; so now, views and dispositions answerable to the nature of the law, become habitual in the heart, through the influences

of the spirit of God, according to the measure of grace received. And this becomes the genuine language of the soul. "How reasonable is it, to love with all my heart, such an infinitely glorious and amiable being! and delight with all my soul in such perfect beauty! and take up my everlasting contentment in the fountain and source of all good! how fit, that I should be wholly for him, whose I entirely am! and be at his beck, whose hands formed me! and at his disposal, who is Lord of all things, and whose rectitude is absolutely perfect, and whose goodness and wisdom are infinite, and who has given his son to die for a lost world! and how beautiful, how much to be desired, that all on earth, should unite as brethren, to live in the dearest love and harmony, as one happy family, under the government of the common father of our spirits, and who is ready to become our everlasting father and friend through Jesus Christ! O, that all the human race would join, with one heart, to repent, and return, and be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ! *Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven.*" And thus he begins to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself; which was the very temper of Jesus Christ. And so *Christ is formed in him.* Which is another name given to the same thing, and the import of it may be thus expressed.

CHRIST formed in the soul.——"He took not on him the nature of angels. Those of them who fell, needed a saviour as much as we. And they were a nobler rank of beings. But they were passed by: and so might we have been, and God had been for ever righteous. His law was holy, just and good. Every mouth was stopped. The whole world stood guilty before God. How free was the grace, how great was the goodness, that provided such a saviour for such a world as this! What love to God, what love to man, induced the son of God to become incarnate! to honour the divine law by his obedience and death, and open a way for
"God

“ God to communicate his grace to us, and for us to
 “ return to God, and be for ever happy in him. To
 “ thee, O Lord, I return, with my whole heart,
 “ through Jesus Christ. In his name alone, I come.
 “ O, may I be found in him, and have on his righte-
 “ ousness, and be accepted in the beloved; and be
 “ sealed with the holy spirit of promise to the day of
 “ redemption, sanctified wholly to the Lord ! O, may
 “ I be in Christ as the branch is in the vine, and par-
 “ take of his nature and spirit; of his fullness receive,
 “ and grace for grace. That the *same mind, which was*
 “ *in Jesus Christ*, and brought him from heaven, and
 “ carried him through all the labours of his life, and
 “ sufferings of his death, *may also be in me*. The same
 “ love to God and regard to the honour of his law, the
 “ same love to a lost world and concern for their salva-
 “ tion. And from this spirit, from which the son of
 “ God became incarnate, lived and died, may I always
 “ stand ready, to sacrifice in his cause, all my earth-
 “ ly comforts, and if need be to lay down my life.”

— And thus, in these views, a spirit answerable to
 the temper of Jesus Christ, and to the design and spirit
 of his mediatorial office and work, is formed in the
 soul.—And we become at heart *his disciples*.—
 And he is able to save them to the uttermost, who
 thus *come unto God by him*, seeing he ever liveth to make
 intercession for them.

THEM that *come unto God by him*.—Another description
 of the same thing.—That *come unto God*.—Unto
 God, the absolutely perfect, the infinitely glorious and
 amiable being, infinitely worthy of supreme love and
 honour and universal obedience, and the supreme good;
 in a view of whose *glory*, an *inclination to come*, is be-
 gotten in the soul.—That *come unto God by him*.
 Encouraged by his mediation, righteousness and atone-
 ment, we are emboldened to enter into the presence
 of the Holy ONE of Israel, in whose sight the hea-
 vens are not clean, and before whom such as we must
 needs appear infinitely odious and abominable.—And
 thus, *if any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature*;
 possessed of a relish, of views and affections, he never
 had before. Yea, *all old things are passed away, behold,*

all things are become new. And this whole change is of God, who thus reconciles us to himself by Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. v. 17, 18.

RECONCILES us to himself by Jesus Christ.——It is through Jesus Christ, who has secured the honour of the divine government, that God communicates those influences of his holy spirit, by which our eyes are opened, to behold the glory of the Lord. And it is through Jesus Christ that the enlightened sinner is emboldened to return to God. And so this reconciliation is brought about wholly through the mediation of Jesus Christ. And in it, we are really reconciled to God, against whom we were before at enmity.

RECONCILED to God.——To God's true and real character exhibited in his law, and ratified on the cross of Christ. We are reconciled to it, as to a character, in itself without a blemish, perfect in beauty; and so begin to rejoice that God, his law, and government, are just what they are, from a sense of their superlative excellency in themselves: no longer disposed, as we used to be, to wish they were different from what they are; rather inclined to say, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.*

So reconciled, as that now,

THE divine law is cordially received as a rule of life by us, and our hearts begin to echo to the language of holy David, in the cxixth Psalm, in its commendation.

AMONG all the effects of divine illumination, there is none more remarkable in its self, or followed with more remarkable consequences, than this, that hereby the true convert, who used to be an enemy to the divine law, is brought understandingly and heartily to love it, and to make it the rule of his life. The grace of God teaches him to “deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world.” Nor is there any thing which more evidently distinguishes a true conversion from every counterfeit than this. “Hereby we know, that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” For every natural man, of whatever sect or party in the christian world, and however religious in his way, is at heart an *Antinomian* in this particular

lar. He doth not, in fact, receive the divine law, in its true meaning and real extent, as the rule of his life ; yea, so far from it, that if he should go about to do it, and if his conscience should in the mean time be awakened to understand it, all his religious affections would stand condemned by it, in his conscience, in a moment ; and all his present hopes be struck dead by it at once. For there is not any one thing about him, any thought, word or action, or any inward bias of heart, in conformity to the divine law, in a natural man. But one natural man is as really *dead in sin*, and devoid of all true holiness, as another. And the only thing, that renders it possible for any natural man to think otherwise of himself, than that he is *dead in sin*, is ignorance of the true nature of the law. " Without the law, sin was dead. I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." What greater change therefore, can happen, than to be brought acquainted with the divine law, to be slain by it, and yet brought to love it, as holy, just and good ; so as to receive it cordially as a rule of life ? What a marvellous alteration must this make in the whole system of our views and affections, and in the whole tenor of our lives ? Even as great, as to be " turned from darkness to light, and " from the power of sin and satan unto God."

EVERY thing which comes into the view of the divinely enlightened soul, harmoniously unites together, to induce him cordially to receive the divine law, as a rule of life ; by which to regulate every inward bias, every thought, word and action. A view of God as an infinitely glorious being, and our common creator, shews how reasonable and beautiful it is for all mankind, who are fellow creatures, children of the same common stock, to unite together as brethren, in supreme love and honour and universal obedience, to the father of the universe, the God of glory, just as the divine law requires.---A view of the divine law, as holy, just and good, a glorious law, antecedent to the consideration of the gift of Christ, and the work of redemption by him, shews that our original obligations to do so, are infinite. And this is also implied in a view of sin,

as an infinite evil ; and in the view of vindictive justice as an amiable perfection in the Deity ; as also in a view of God, as the supreme good.——A view of the incarnation, life and death of the son of God, to do honour to the divine law, in order to open a way for the pardon of the penitent believer, consistent with the honour of the supreme governor of the world, sets before us the highest possible proof, of an external nature, of the goodness and excellency of the divine law; even the highest proof, that could have been given by God the father, or God the son.——Besides, we have herein a perfect obedience to the divine law recommended to us, by an example, in itself, the most engaging, set before us on design that we should imitate it ; and set us by him, who left his father's bosom, and died on the cross to redeem us from all iniquity; and purify us to himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.——Add to all this, the divinely enlightened soul, in consequence of the new taste and relish communicated in regeneration (*Rom. viii. 5.*) begins to discern, that it is not only the fittest, but the happiest thing in the world, yea, is even the beginning of eternal life, and foretaste of heaven, to aspire to be holy as God is holy, to love God and live to him and live upon him through Jesus Christ, and love the people of God, and love all mankind, and be and do in every respect as the divine law requires.——Besides, the infinite obligations we are under hereunto in point of gratitude to God and to his son, for the infinite goodness manifested in the work of our redemption. To all which we may add, the eternal rewards, which are to be granted by Jesus our final judge, to all his obedient disciples at the last day ; for services so sinfully defective, as not fit to be accepted, were it not for our union with and relation to him, who is God's beloved son and heir of all things. For at that day, not so much as a cup of cold water, given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall be overlooked or pass unrewarded. The highest rewards, which the kings of the earth, give to victorious generals, who have ventured their lives in their service in the wars, is some title of honour, or post of profit, a laurel leaf, a mere trifle

trifle; but Jesus gives an eternal reward in heaven, for but *a cup of cold water*.—These, and all other things, which come into the view of the divinely enlightened soul, harmoniously unite together, to induce him cordially to give God the throne, resign to his authority, be at his command, and receive his law as a perfect universal rule, according to which, to feel and think, to speak and act, through all his life, and to look upon himself infinitely to blame, wherein soever he comes short of yielding that perfect love and obedience, which the law requires.

AND what must be the consequence of this, considering, that the best are sanctified but in part, and that the law requires sinless perfection?—What, but *the law is spiritual, I am carnal, sold under sin, O wretched man that I am*——What, but a continual sense of infinite blame, a life of self-loathing and self-abhorrence, of godly sorrow, of penitency, of broken-heartedness, of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, of watching, of prayer, of fighting, of striving, of running, of wrestling, &c. just as the New Testament represents the christian life to be. And what must be the consequence of all this? but a growing sense of our need of, and absolute dependance upon the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace every day. “We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” And thus true saints are trained up to prize the redeemer, and the sanctifier, and live wholly by faith; while at the same time, they are perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.

AND in this view, it is easy to see the reason, why a life of universal obedience is constantly represented in the holy scriptures, as peculiar to true saints, in distinction from all false professors; as true saints are the only persons in the world, who cordially receive the divine law as a rule of life. *Mat. vii. 21—27, Chap. xiii. 23. John xv. 2, 6, 14. Jam. ii. 10. 1 John ii. 3, 4, 5, 6. Chap. iii. 3—10. Chap. v. 18. &c. &c.*

AND in this view, it is easy to see the reason, why humility is, at the same time, and in perfect consistency

represented, through all the scriptures, as a chief part of a good man's character. An hypocrite, being ignorant of the divine law, the more religious he is, the more proud and conceited will he be : but with a true saint it is just the contrary. For if the divine law is his rule of duty, and if his obligations perfectly to conform thereto are infinite, and his blame for every defect proportionably great, and if the fault is wholly in him, if his remaining spiritual blindness is altogether criminal, his stupidity to the beauty of divine things wholly vicious, his want of perfect love to God and Christ, and the most tender regard to the welfare of mankind inexcusable wickedness, &c. &c. If this be the true state of the case, and if he views things in this light, a mean and low thought of himself, and an answerable frame of heart, as he has all the reason in the world for it, must be a very essential part of his character. *Hab. ii. 4.* "Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him." No greater proof, as man is ignorant of the truth, as it is in Jesus, than spiritual pride reigning in his heart. The graceless Pharisee, ignorant of the true sense of the divine law, was ready to say, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men.* While the penitent publican in a view of the truth, it was altogether natural to smite upon his breast, and say, *God, be merciful to me a sinner.* The Pharisees were ready to say, *Behold we see.* While the holy Psalmist lifts up his cry to heaven. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law." *Psal. cxix. 18.* Which is the genuine language of the heart of the most enlightened saint. For says the apostle. *Phil. iii. 13, 14.* "I count not myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, I reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

AND to a man of a humble, broken, contrite heart, it will be easy to bear injuries, to love and forgive enemies ; and natural in lowliness of mind to prefer others before himself, to render honour to whom honour is due, and as much as in him lies live peaceably with all men, according to the exhortations of the gospel. Besides,

sides, that such a frame of heart must be an excellent preparative to all social and relative duties. So that the character of a good husband, a good wife, a good parent, a good child, a good neighbour, &c. meek, kind, just, honest, faithful, &c. will be the native result of divine illumination. "And thus the saints are the salt of the earth, the light of the world: and while others behold their good works, they are constrained to glorify their father which is in Heaven." And the connection between divine illumination and all holy living, is so certain and infallible, that it is declared from Heaven, "that he that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. For we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

AND as divine illumination, thus lays the foundation for all christian graces and duties; so at the same time it equally lays a foundation for all christian comforts and consolation.

A view of God the absolutely perfect, the infinitely glorious and amiable being, as manifested in the gospel of Christ, is a source of ineffable joy and consolation to the divinely enlightened soul. The holy beauty of the divine nature, is, in itself, the most sweet and ravishing thing in the universe, which can be beheld by angels or men. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory," is the language of Heaven in a transport. And the ineffable glory of the divine nature is the first and chief thing, which strikes the mind and charms the heart of him that is enlightened. "This is life eternal; this is the beginning of Heaven, to KNOW thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

A view of an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, at the head of the universe, presents before the mind an all-sufficient good; a glorious and ravishing sight, to a poor, orphan, self-ruined creature, in want of all things: and a sight never before seen and indeed no where else to be seen in Heaven or Earth. The joys which are the native result of this view, no words can fully express. "It is joy unspeakable and

“ full of glory. Psal. lxxiii, 25. Whom have I in
 “ Heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I
 “ desire besides thee.”—For,

As, in divine illumination, the mind is thoroughly convinced of the truth of the gospel; so it appears to the soul, both, that God can consistently with his honour, and that he is willing, to receive to favour, any, the most naked, forlorn, wretched, guilty, ill deserving, of the human race, which shall come unto God by Jesus Christ; and to become a God and Father and friend and portion to them through him. Which is to see even God himself, the infinitely glorious God, the supreme good, presented to his choice, through Jesus Christ, as the portion of his soul. “ All things are ready, come unto the marriage. It appears to be a feast.” He makes no excuse. But like the man, in Matt. xiii. 44. who having “ found a treasure hid in a field, for JOY thereof, he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” And so he drinks of that water, spoken of in John iv. 10.—14. which, *whosoever, drinketh, shall never thirst.*” And when he comes sensibly to have God, for his God, Father and portion, he is happier than if all the world were his own. Hab. iii. 17, 18. “ Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, &c. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Therefore said the apostle to the primitive christians, not in the least dejected for his part, although then a prisoner at *Rome*, and his converts in a state of persecution, “ rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.” Phil. iv. 4, 6, 7.—For, in choosing God for our supreme good, all earthly idols are resigned, our treasure is laid up in Heaven; and if grace flourishes in our hearts, our comforts will remain, let outward things go as they will. Besides, it is found by experience, that it is *good to be afflicted*; that *afflictions work the peaceable fruits of righteousness*; for all things
 work

“work together for good to them that love God.” And so the heart is reconciled to, yea, rejoiceth in, God’s ways toward the children of men in this life.—Besides,

To see an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable Being, at the head of the universe, is matter of unspeakable joy. Both because it is an honour due to him, who is by nature God, to be supreme, to take the throne, to rule and reign, and be worshipped as God : and because it is infinitely to the advantage of the intellectual system, to be under a government, in it’s own nature absolutely perfect. *Psal.* xcvi. 1. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.” *Psal.* xcvi. 1. “O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth.” Ver. 4. “For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.” Ver. 8. “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.” Ver. 10. “Say among the heathen, the Lord reigneth.” Ver. 11, 12, 13. “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar and the fulness thereof: let the field be joyful and all that is therein. Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the earth with righteousness, and the people with his truth.” *Psal.* cxlviii. “Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights: praise him all ye his angels: praise him all his hosts:” &c. &c. “For his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven.” &c.—

Besides,

A view of the divine law as holy, just and good, a glorious law, and of vindictive justice as a beauty in the divine character, dispels those black, gloomy, blasphemous thoughts, which are apt to haunt benighted souls, and gradually leads the mind to discern the holiness, justice and goodness of God’s general plan of government, as represented in the holy scripture, from the fall of angels, down to the day of judgment, and through eternal ages. Whereby a heavenly serenity and joy spreads through the souls of the saints, to see all God’s ways to be right; and

and even those parts of his conduct, which, to many, appear so horrible, to be really beautiful in themselves, worthy of God, and to his eternal honour. "Of whom, and by whom, and to whom, are all things: to whom be glory for ever, Amen." *Rom. xi. 36.*

Besides, the exceeding great glory to God and good to the saved, which in time and eternity, are, according to the scriptures, to result from the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of the Son of God, is an inexhaustible source of joy and consolation, to those who are divinely enlightened; as they are deeply interested in the honour of God and of his Son, and in the welfare of his holy and eternal kingdom. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will toward men;" was the joyful song of the heavenly hosts, at the birth of the Saviour. And the hearts of all the saints echo to it with ineffable consolation.—Moreover,

To love God, to love his holy law, to feel every answerable affection toward the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, to present and offer up ourselves a living sacrifice to God, to love the people of God, to love all mankind, to love and forgive enemies, to go about the common duties of life in the fear of God, and as his servants, heavenly minded, of a meek and quiet spirit, composed, sedate, with our loins girt, always watching and always praying, is the happiest way of living on this side heaven. The exercise of these and all the other graces of the christian life, is, itself, a pleasure divinely sweet. "Wisdom's ways are pleasant, and all her paths are peace." *Prov. iii. 17.* "Great peace have they that love thy law; and nothing shall offend them," *Psal. cxix. 165.* In a word, a humble, broken, contrite heart, mortified to all earthly goods, and fortified against all earthly evils, and used to converse with the Deity, is attended with pleasures unspeakably preferable to all this world can boast.

Thus divine illumination lays the foundation for christian graces and christian comforts. They are connected together in the experiences of the saints, just as they are in the promises of God's word. For all the promises of God are in Christ, yea, and amen. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will

“ I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and
 “ learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and
 “ ye shall find rest to your souls,” *Mat. xi. 28, 29.*
 “ For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth
 “ eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and
 “ holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and
 “ humble spirit ; to revive the spirit of the humble, and
 “ to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” *Isai. lvii. 15.*
 “ For he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”
Luke xviii. 14. “ He that hath my commandments and
 “ keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that
 “ loveth me, shall be loved of my Father ; and I will
 “ love him, and manifest myself unto him,” *John xiv.*
 21.—Thus christian graces and christian comforts go
 together.—And if the graces and comforts of the saints
 are at any time in a languishing state, it is owing to
 their spiritual blindness, which is altogether of a criminal
 nature ; and so the fault is entirely their own :
 for the truths exhibited to view in the gospel, beheld in
 their glory, are sufficient to make their graces and com-
 forts always abound.—And if the graces and comforts
 of the saints are in a flourishing state, it is entirely owing
 to spiritual light, or a sense of the glory of divine
 truths communicated to them from God, of his mere
 self-moving goodness and infinite grace through Jesus
 Christ, to creatures infinitely unworthy : and so all the
 glory is due to him, “ of whom, and by whom, and to
 “ whom are all things, to whom be glory for ever,
 “ amen.”

THUS we have taken a view, a very brief, general
 imperfect view of the effects of Divine Illumination ;
 and may now conclude this section with a few re-
 marks.

1. THE graces and joys of saints on earth, and saints
 in heaven, are of the same nature. The same kind of
 holiness and happiness is begun in divine illumination in
 this world, as saints are possessed of in heaven, only in
 a much lower degree. *Eternal life* is begun in them.
 (*John xvii 3.*) They are *passed from death to life.* (*John*
v. 24.) They begin to live. They begin to view
 things and feel toward them as they do in heaven. The
 same light which now shines, will *shine more and more*
 unto

unto the perfect day. (*Prov. iv. 18.*) At first it is very small like a grain of mustard seed; but it is of the same kind with that perfect holiness and happiness which is above. And so it is an earnest of heaven. (*Eph. i. 14.*) Yea, it is of the same kind with the perfect holiness and happiness of Jesus Christ their head. For they are made partakers of the divine nature. (*2 Pet. i. 4.*) Of his fullness they all receive, and grace for grace. (*John i. 16.*) For he is the vine, and they are the branches; (*John xv.*) all animated by the same spirit, and possessed of the same kind of life.—And indeed there is but one kind of true holiness in the universe, whether viewed in God the Father, or in Christ the mediator, or in saints who are members of Christ. God is the original fountain and standard of true holiness; the moral law is a transcript of God's moral perfections, the very image of his heart; a perfect conformity to this law, through the greatest trials, in life and death, constituted the mediatorial perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, our representative and our pattern; and that holiness in believers, wherein they resemble Jesus Christ, consists in conformity to this same law. And herein it is distinguished from every counterfeit in the world. Let it once therefore be determined, what that moral character is, which God exhibits of himself in his law, and wherein it's beauty lies, and what it is to love it, as the divine law originally required of mankind, and the nature of true holiness is ascertained beyond dispute *.

AND in this view, it appears with a striking evidence; that he who never beheld the glory of the divine law,

* Mr. Cudworth grants, that, that kind of holiness I plead for, is that kind of holiness the divine law originally required "The rightness of the original state of man." *Farther Def.* p. 225. And so it is that kind of holiness which was in Jesus Christ, and which is in heaven. And I readily grant, that it is specifically different from that kind of holiness which he pleads for. As he maintains, "There is no loveliness in the divine nature to be conceived of only in a belief that he loves me." p. 221, 222. The only question then is, Whether there be two kinds of holiness, essentially different in their nature, and yet both of the right kind.—A question easy to be answered.

never

never had any relish for holy beauty, or love to rue holiness in his heart ; and all his seeming love to Christ is nothing but exercise of selfish affections occasioned by delusion, together with ignorance of Christ's true character. For the holiness of Christ as mediator, was but a conformity to this original law ; and if the law was not glorious, neither can there be any glory in a perfect conformity thereto. He therefore that is blind to the beauty of the divine law, is equally blind to the beauty of Christ, and equally blind to the beauty of the divine nature, and indeed to all holy beauty in the universe ; whether existing in God, or Christ, or saints ; or manifested in any part of the holy scripture, or in any part of the divine conduct which ever came to our knowledge.

2. UNLESS we look upon the vindictive justice of the Deity, as a beauty in the divine character, no christian grace can be exercised, or christian comfort enjoyed. For, there can be no christian grace without love to God's real character, nor christian comfort without esteeming God the supreme good. But vindictive justice is essential to that character of God, which is presented to the christian's view in the cross of Christ ; as well as in the whole of the divine conduct from the fall of angels down to the day of judgment. And one bad property, entirely approved of and constantly exercised, will render any moral character devoid of beauty. And if there is no moral beauty in the divine character, he is neither worthy of supreme love, nor capable of being the supreme good to holy minds. And if there is no love to God's character, nor delight in him as the supreme good ; there is no christian grace, nor christian comfort.

IF vindictive justice is not a beauty in the divine character, then it will follow, that there is no beauty in the divine nature, no beauty in the divine law, no beauty in the gospel of Christ, no beauty in any part of God's universal plan of government ; as vindictive justice spreads through and is essential to the whole.—And so, no ground or reason, upon the whole, for any one being in the universe to love God's character, or rejoice in his government : but all reason, for the whole intellectual system,

system, to wish for an entire revolution in God's empire, to have every thing turned upside down, and put upon a new footing, and under another regulation.

To view the vindictive justice of the divine nature, as a beauty in the divine character; is to see, that all heaven ought forever to love and adore the infinitely glorious majesty, for punishing sin according to it's desert, *Rev. xix. 1—6*, And unless it appears to us a beauty in the divine conduct thus to punish sin, we shall be at enmity against his whole plan of government; and can never understandingly and from the heart, wish him well, or wish any of his subjects to pay him honour; unless we go on this stupid maxim, "If I am safe, I care not what becomes of others." And even this, is to give up the honour of the Deity, as well as the welfare of our fellow-creatures; and in deed, and in truth, "to wish well to none but ourselves."—And this is really, in one word, the life and heart and soul of all the religious joys any experience, who are blind to the beauty of the divine nature, and enemies to his law and government.

3. DIVINE truths spiritually known, i. e. seen in their divine glory, beget and excite all those holy affections, which constitute the christian character, even that the whole system of divine truths, held forth to view, from the beginning of *Genesis*, to the end of the *Revelation*, making up one harmonious, consistent, beautiful whole, hath influence in this affair, to beget and excite all those holy affections, which form the character of *a new man in Christ Jesus*; and which lays a sure foundation for that holy and divine life, which agrees with the whole tenor of the bible, and is peculiar to the true followers of the Lamb.—It is granted, that

THIS whole system of truths, ever so clearly seen, by a mind of an ill taste, and to which the whole appears very disagreeable and odious, will excite dislike and hatred. As when, 1700 years ago, this whole system of truths were exemplified in the character of Jesus Christ, before the eyes of the wicked Jews, who, the more they knew of him, the more they hated him. *They have both seen and hated, both me and my Father.* So the fallen angels, the more they know of the truths contained

rained in the bible, the more they hate them. And the same may be said of all the children of disobedience, who are left of God to their own hearts lusts, and are under the power of the prince of the air, led captive by him at his will. For the carnal mind being at enmity against God, is, of course, equally at enmity against that whole system of truth in which his true character is exhibited. And it is this, which renders the regenerating influences of the holy spirit absolutely necessary in order that divine truths may be seen in such a light as to beget and excite all holy affections. The regenerating influences of the holy spirit are not necessary to make false schemes of religion seem lovely to a carnal heart: because such schemes are calculated for it, and in their own nature are adapted to suit carnal hearts. And were the scripture system of sentiments as agreeable to a carnal heart, as the system of sentiments contained in false schemes, it might appear agreeable and lovely, and excite answerable affections without such influences; and so the doctrine of regeneration by the holy spirit might have been left out of the bible, just as it is out of all false schemes. But being what it is, *except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* The gospel will be hid from him. *For the natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit of God.* Did the sum and substance of the gospel consist in a revelation, that *there is forgiveness with God for impenitent sinners*, or that *my sins in particular are forgiven*, I might without the regenerating influences of the holy spirit, merely from self-love, be ravished with this. Or did the sum and substance of the gospel consist in a revelation, that such a civil, sober, honest life, will entitle me to heaven, as my present comfort and worldly interest naturally excites me to, I might be pleased with the gospel revelation without any influences from above at all. And the like may be said in all similar cases. —

Again,

THE scripture system of divine truths being one harmonious consistent whole, the true divine beauty of no particular truth can be seen by a mind, at enmity against any part of the whole system: the nature of every particular divine truth being the same, exactly the same,

as the nature of the whole. And for this reason, it is as easy to discern the beauty of one particular truth, of which the mind has a clear conception, as of another; one being, when rightly understood, no more contrary to a carnal heart than another. For instance, the true beauty of divine goodness rightly understood, is as remote from the sight of a wicked man, as the true beauty of vindictive justice. And the reason it seems otherwise to many wicked men, is because their notion of God's goodness, and of God's justice are not according to truth. For in God these two perfections are perfectly harmonious. God's severity against sin, harmonizes with his goodness; and his goodness harmonizes with his severity against sin. For God's nature is in perfect harmony with itself. But wicked men are very apt to view the matter in a different light; and so while they hate one perfection, they imagine they love another. Or to allude to the Manichean scheme, while they hate the God of the Old Testament, they love the God of the new; or to express the same thing in modern language, while they hate God out of Christ, they love God in Christ. But all this is wholly owing to their mistaking the true nature of things. He who really loves any one of the divine perfections, on the account of its real loveliness, cannot fail to love them all, and he who is blind to the beauty of one, is equally blind to the beauty of all. For, in strict truth, all the moral perfections of God are really but one, as was before observed, although differently denominated, from their different exercises toward various objects. *1 John i. 5.* "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." "Perfect in beauty, without a blemish." *Deut. xxxii. 4. Isai. vi. 3.*—Moreover, let it be observed and carefully attended to, that

ALL divine truths in general, and without any one exception, are suited to beget and excite holy affections in divinely enlightened souls. There is not one truth in the whole scripture scheme, but what is "a doctrine according to godliness," *1 Tim. vi. 3.* And all jointly unite their influence to form the character of the godly man. *Rom. vi. 17.* "ye have obeyed from the heart,
" that

"that form of doctrine which was delivered you."—Is God represented in scripture, as the Creator and Lord of all things? "O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker," is the effect. *Psalms* xcv. 6. Is God represented as the governor of the world, and his government, as being, like himself, absolutely perfect? "the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof," is the effect, *Psalms* xcvi. 1. Is God represented as the supreme good? "Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee," is the effect, *Psalms* lxxiii. 25. Is God's law represented as holy, just, and good, a perfect law? "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day," is the effect, *Psalms* xix. 8. and cxix. 97. And doth the divine law threaten eternal damnation for the least defect? and is it represented as glorious in this view? *Gal.* iii. 10. *2 Cor.* iii. 7, 9. "Thou art righteous when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest; our mouth is stopped and we stand guilty before God; and I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God;" is the effect, *Rom.* iii. 4, 19. *Gal.* ii. 19. Is there no other name but Christ's given under Heaven whereby men can be saved? "To rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," is the effect. *Phil.* iii. 3. It is said, be ye perfect, as your father which is in Heaven is perfect? the effect is, "I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth toward those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." *Phil.* iii. 13, 14. The same might be said of every divine truth in the whole scripture system; for they are all of them *doctrines according to godliness*.

And therefore

We may easily and with the greatest certainty answer this question. "Are men regenerated by the law, or by the gospel?—If by *regenerated*, is meant *enabled to see the holy beauty of divine truths*, we are regenerated neither by
the

the law, nor by the gospel, or by any external means or instructions whatsoever; but by the immediate influences of the holy spirit. *Mat. xi. 25. Chap. xvii. 17. John vi. 45. 2 Cor. iv. 6.*—If by *regenerated*, is meant, *holy affections being begotten and excited in the heart*, in this sense we are regenerated by the law, and regenerated by the gospel, and regenerated by every divine truth in general. Agreeable to that of our blessed Saviour (*John xvii.*) “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” For the divine law is God’s word, as much as the gospel. Every divine truth is the word of God. To say, that there are some particular divine truths, which although known, do not beget and excite in us holy affections answerable to their nature; is to say, that there are some divine truths which we do not love; which is to say, that we are hypocrites.

Object.—BUT does not St. Paul say, *I have begotten you through the gospel?*

Answer.—Very true. And does not *David* say, *The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul?*—only understand these texts in a consistency with each other, and you may be a consistent christian. But if the character of God, as exhibited in the law, appears odious to you, and excites hatred and heart risings; while the character of God, which you imagine to be exhibited in the gospel, appears lovely, and excites love and joy;—you are not a christian—you are a Manichean—you hate the God of the Old Testament, and love the God of the New. And so you have two Gods, of characters essentially different. But St. Paul’s gospel was built on this, as a fundamental maxim, that God’s character, as exhibited in the law, was perfect in beauty, without a blemish. For, to do honour to this character, according to St. Paul, the Son of God became incarnate and died on the cross, even *to declare his Father’s righteousness, that he might be just, and yet the justifier of the believer.* St. Paul’s gospel comprized the whole system of divine truths, in their proper arrangement, in perfect harmony. To be begotten by his gospel, is to have holy affections answerable to that whole system excited in

in us; and so, to become, not *Manicheans*, but consistent christians; *obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which he delivered*—and even reason teaches, that it must be so.—For,

If divinely enlightened souls have a relish for holy beauty, for such beauty as there is in God's real character; then every divine truth, as it exhibits his real character; will, if it comes into our view, appear beautiful; and will accordingly beget and excite holy affections answerable to it's nature. But the divine law gives a very bright exhibition of God's real character in its precepts, promises and threatnings, as they are holy, just and good, a transcript of the holiness, justice and goodness of the divine nature, the very image of his heart. The divine law therefore is suited in it's own nature to excite holy affections, in the divinely enlightened soul, as well as the cross of Christ. And in fact it does so, from the very moment his eyes begin to be opened at conversion, until they are perfectly opened in Heaven. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb," *Psalms* xix. 7.—10.

Object. "But what occasion was there then for the death of Christ?"

Answer. 1. Absolutely none at all, under a notion the law was too severe, a bad, an unamiable law, and we the abused injured party, that by his death he might purchase for us the relief which was our due, and so pacify our imbibittered angry minds, which had been exasperated against the deity, the lawgiver, and bring us to have a good thought of God, as being "altogether made up of love to us;" and in this view to be reconciled to him, against whom, viewed as exhibited in his holy law, "we are full of hatred and heart-rifings, in spite of our hearts."—to believe the son of God died for this purpose, to view his death in this light, and to grow devout in such a view, is as bad as down right infidelity. And such a religion, refusing
from

from these blasphemous views, must be infinitely provoking to the Deity.—No *American* Pagan, no *African* Hottentot, ever espoused a scheme of religion, more absurd in itself, or more impious in its nature.—“What occasion was there then for the death of Christ?”

2. “What occasion?” A surprisingly stupid question?—When as, the beauty of the divine law, and the transcendent beauty and glory of the divine character as exhibited in the law, was the occasion, the great occasion, the only occasion, of the death of an incarnate God, in the room of a God despising, God-hating world, that hereby he might vindicate the divine character, declare it to be right, and give a public proof, the greatest which could have been given, that the law was holy, just and good, to the end, that consistent with the honour of his character and government, and to the glory of his grace, God might have mercy on whom he will have mercy, open the eyes of the elect, and bring them to repent and return to God through Jesus Christ, and in his name, and simply on his account, pardon and save them with an everlasting salvation.—And besides, this very view of the divine law, is the very thing which leads the enlightened soul to see it's need of Christ's atonement: for no man, can see his need of the atonement of Christ to do honour to the divine law, unless he sees that which renders it needful: but the excellency and honourableness of the divine law, which we had dishonoured, was the only thing, which rendered the atonement of Christ needful, in order to our salvation. If the law had not been a glorious law, and worthy of this honour, there had been no need, no occasion for the death of Christ in order to our salvation, as has been before proved.—But to return.

ALL holy affections, I say, are begotten and excited by the truth.—On the other hand, in all false schemes of religion, their love and joy, and all their devout affections, in which a carnal heart is so much pleased, are begotten and excited by a lie: a lie invented to please a carnal heart. I say, in all false schemes of religion. And this is the reason that false schemes of

of religion are adhered to by deluded sinners with such an invincible obstinacy. They suit the carnal hearts : but they hate the truth. And therefore in the apostolic age while the apostles were yet alive, with all their inspiration, their miracles, their zeal, their tears, they could not help the matter ; but in spite of all they could do, it in fact was, as *St. Paul* told *Timothy*, *evil men and seducers, shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.* 2 Tim. iii. 13.

YEA, such is the nature of mankind, and such the nature of our holy religion, that nothing can be done to purpose in propagating true christianity, without divine influences from above. The experiment has been made, and thoroughly made.—Our blessed Saviour preached at *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida* and *Capernaum*, and spake as never man spake, and wrought many miracles before their eyes ; but not so much as one of his hearers were brought to repentance by all his preaching and miracles, those only excepted, to whom God by his spirit internally revealed the truth in its glory. Yea, our Saviour had no expectation, to make converts by the force of preaching and miracles : he even laid it down for a maxim, that *no man can come to the son but whom the father draws*. Without divine teaching he knew, that all external instruction would be ineffectual. But he always laid all the blame at the sinner's door. *Mat.* xi. 20—25. *John* vi. 44. *Chap.* viii. 42—47. *Chap.* xv. 22. *Mat.* xxii. 1—7.

So likewise, the apostle *Paul*, of mere men the best preacher that ever lived, let him preach *in the demonstration of the spirit and power*, let him *travail in birth* for his hearers, and *reason out of the scriptures*, and add miracles to his arguments, it was all the same ; the Jews were provoked, and the Gentiles laughed ; Christ crucified was a stumbling block to the one, and foolishness to the other. Nor did he ever make one sincere convert, to christianity in his life, merely by the force of external means. Nay, after long experience, he publicly declared to the world, that “ the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”——Mean

while, the false teachers, who hated *St. Paul*, could make converts thick and fast, sincere converts to their false schemes, among graceless professors, whose hearts like tinder, stood ready to catch the false fire, which they communicated.——A carnal heart may love a false gospel. Among the great variety of false schemes perhaps there is no carnal heart but may find some one to his mind. If not, he can invent one of his own exactly to suit his state. But no unregenerate man will love the truth. Neither arguments, nor miracles will bring him to it.

4. WHAT has been said, may lead us to see, what *St. Paul* means by the *calling*, the *holy calling*, the *heavenly calling*, the *high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, which he speaks of as common to all true saints, and peculiar to them alone. *1 Cor. i. 26. 2 Tim. i. 9. Heb. iii. 1. Phil. iii. 14.*—speaking of this calling in *Rom. viii. 28.* he says, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are CALLED according to his purpose.” And again, *ver. 30,* “Whom he did predestinate, them he also CALLED; and whom he CALLED, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” And in *1 Cor. i. 23, 24.* “We preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but to them that are CALLED, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” Compared with *ver. 18.* “The preaching of the cross is to them that PERISH foolishness; but unto us who are SAVED, it is the power of God.” Compared with *1 Cor. ii. 14.* “The NATURAL man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. *ver. 15.* But he that is SPIRITUAL judgeth all things.” Compared with *Rom. viii. 9.* “If any man, have not the SPIRIT of Christ, he is none of his.” Compared also with *2 Cor. iv. 3.* “If our gospel is HID, it is hid to them that are LOST, *ver. 14.* in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should

“ should shine unto them, *ver.* 6. For he who command-
 “ ed light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our
 “ hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glo-
 “ ry of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Compared
 with 1 *Thes.* i. 5. “ For our gospel came not unto you
 “ in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy
 “ Ghost, and in much assurance. *chap.* ii. 13. When
 “ ye received the word of God which ye heard of us,
 “ ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is
 “ in truth) the word of God, which effectually work-
 “ eth also in you that believe.” Compared with *Mat.*
 xiii. 23. “ He that received seed into good ground, is
 “ he that heareth the word and UNDERSTANDETH it,
 “ which also beareth fruit.” Explained by 2 *Cor.* iii.
 “ 18. “ We all with open face beholding as in a
 “ glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the
 “ same image.”

WHEN the apostles went forth, according to their
 master's commission, to preach the gospel to every crea-
 ture, they first declared, explained and proved the
 great truths they had to deliver, commending them-
 selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God :
 then they CALLED upon their hearers to “ repent and
 “ believe the gospel, to repent and be baptized in the
 “ name of Jesus, to repent and be converted, to be-
 “ lieve in the Lord Jesus Christ, to repent and turn to
 “ God,” saying, *All things are ready, come unto the mar-
 riage.** Many who heard these things, who had this
external

* Mr. Sandeman imagining that there is forgiveness with
 God through the atonement for impenitent sinners, while
 such, would not have sinners called upon in the apostolic lan-
 guage, *repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted
 out*, or in the language of our Saviour, *come for all things are
 ready*. Rather he would have preachers only endeavour to
 hold forth evidence to convince sinners, that there is forgive-
 ness with God for impenitent sinners, while such. A passive
 belief of which, he says, begets hope that I am pardoned.
 And this hope begets love to this doctrine of forgiveness,
 which thus relieves me ; in which, he says, all godliness con-
 sists. And thus, as no act, exercise, or exertion of the human
 mind is requisite in order to pardon on his scheme, so the sin-

external CALL, made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize, others mocked, and others were enraged. Thus many were CALLED who did not come. For their eyes were blind that they could not see, and their ears were heavy that they could not hear. But as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. The election obtained, and the rest were blinded. For, *whom he did predestinate them he also CALLED*. And these all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord were changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

“WHOM he did predestinate them he also CALLED. “—— *He, that is, God.*” God himself called them. As it is written, *they shall all be taught of God.* God himself revealed these things to them. *Mat. xi. 25.* Opened the whole gospel way of life in it's divine glory to their souls; and so gave them to see, that it was in truth, *the word of God*. In which view, the *call* of the gospel to repent and be converted, to turn to God through Jesus Christ, could not fail to be *effectual*. They beheld the gospel in it's glory, they believed it to be true, every answerable affection was begotten in their hearts, they exercised repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, they loved the gospel, they the loved brethren, they loved all mankind, they were willing to part with all things, and even joyfully to lay down their lives for the truth.——And whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified. For nothing could ever separate them from the love of God, neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword: nay, in all these things they were more than conquerors, through him who loved

ner is to be called to no act, exercise, or exertion whatsoever. And therefore he entirely excludes the *call of the gospel*. And as the *external call* of the gospel is left out of his scheme, so also is the *internal call*. And a passive belief that there is forgiveness with God for impenitent sinners, and a hope that I am forgiven, supply the place of that *effectual calling* which was essential to the apostolic scheme. See his *Letters on Theron*, and to Mr. Pike.

them,

them. For the same mind was in them that was in Christ Jesus, and which carried him through all the labours of his life, and sufferings of his death. For the spirit of Christ dwelt in them, and they were able to do all things, through Christ strengthening them.—And thus, this was the true nature of Christ's holy religion in ancient times, in the apostolic age.

AND thus we have considered the nature and glory of the gospel, the nature and consequences of spiritual blindness, and the nature and effects of divine illumination, as was proposed; and nothing now remains, but in as few words as possible, to point out the fundamental principles on which all the reasonings in this essay are built, and to shew that we must come into this system of sentiments, or turn infidels, or with hereticks of old, be inconsistent, and so self-condemned.—And this shall be attempted in *the conclusion*.

The CONCLUSION.

There is no consistent Medium between antient Apostolic Christianity, and Infidelity.

IF the judicious, candid reader, will now stop, look back, and review, from beginning to end, the foregoing essay, he will find the whole system of sentiments contained in it, all naturally founded in, and resulting from these *three propositions*.

PROP. I. THE great God, the creator, preserver, Lord and governor of the world, is an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being, the supreme good, infinitely worthy of supreme love and honour, and universal obedience from his creature man.

PROP. II. THE divine law, which requires this of us, on pain of eternal death, is holy, just and good, a glorious law, worthy to be magnified and kept in honour in God's government.

PROP. III. THE design of the mediatorial office and work of the son of God incarnate, was to do honour to the divine law, and thereby open a way, in which, God might call, and sinners might come to him, and be received to favour, and intitled to eternal life, consistently with the honour of the divine government.

IF these *three propositions* are true, then that whole scheme of sentiments, which necessarily results from them, must be equally true. To grant the propositions and to deny their necessary consequences, is to be inconsistent.——And he who denies the *first proposition*, that is, the existence of an absolutely perfect being, is an *Atheist*. And to deny the *second* or the *third*, is to give up the bible, and be an *infidel*.——Again, he who owns the *first* must grant the *second*, or be inconsistent.

ent. For, if God be such a being, as the *first* asserts, the divine law must be what the *second* affirms. And if the *first* and *second* are true, no man can doubt of the third.

BUT to reduce all to *one point*, and to be a little more particular.———*Christ was made a curse, to redeem us from the curse of the law*; even from the *curse of that law* which curses every one that *continueth not in all things*.——To deny that this law, from the curse of which Christ redeems us, requires perfect obedience, is expressly to contradict the word of God, which declares that it requires us to *continue in all things*.——To deny that this law comprises *eternal ruin* in its curse, is again expressly to contradict the word of God, which declares, that Christ delivers his people *from the wrath to come*; and over and over again declares, that the *wrath to come* will be *everlasting*, where the *worn shall never die*, and the *fire never be quenched*. It therefore appears to be a fact as certain, as that the New Testament is true, that the Son of God incarnate, died on the cross, to bear the curse of that law, which required perfect obedience of us, on pain of eternal misery.——Now,

THAT the Son of God, by his Father's appointment, should leave the world of glory, become incarnate, appear and stand and die in our room, to bear the curse which was by law due to us, is a fact, the most wonderful and astonishing, that ever reached human ears.——And pray, what end had God the Father, or God the Son, in this infinitely surprising affair?

To say, that God the Father gave his only begotten and well beloved Son to die, absolutely, for no end at all, when sinners might have been saved in every respect as well without; is to say, that *Christ crucified*, is *not the wisdom of God*: and the doctrine of the cross must be owned to be, what its ancient adversaries affirmed, *foolishness*. Which is to say, it is not from God.

If the Son of God incarnate, was made a curse to redeem us from the curse of the law, for some end:——It must have been either——(1.) Because the law was bad, was too severe; and so he died to deliver us from the too great rigour and severity of the law, and to put us under a more equitable constitution. Or——(2.) He died because the law was good, to do it honour, to declare God's righteousness, that he might be just, and yet the justifier

ustifier of the believer——A third end, distinct from these two, cannot be mentioned.

If the Son of God left his Father's bosom, became incarnate, and died on the cross, because the law was bad, was too severe, &c. then it will follow, (1.) That in fact, the law was bad, and God the Father knew it, and God the Son knew it. (2.) It had therefore been inconsistent with every perfection of the divine nature, to have held mankind bound by this law, if Christ had never died. And therefore, (3.) There was evidently no need of his death in the case; unless we will say, (Heaven forbid the blasphemy,) that God the Father was such a tyrant, that he could not do us justice, unless moved thereto by the blood of his own son.—Which to say, is worse than down-right infidelity.

If the Son of God left his Father's bosom, became incarnate, and died on the cross, because the law was good, to do it honour, &c. then also it will follow, (1.) That the law was in fact good, and worthy of all this honour; and God the Father knew it, and God the Son knew it.—Yea, and every child of Adam, knows it; whose eyes are opened to see it, as it is.—2. And therefore all our ill thoughts of the divine law are groundless, yea infinitely criminal. They are of the nature of blasphemy against God the Father, and God the Son. And he who does not look upon this law, as glorious, so infinitely honoured by the Father and the Son, may justly be reputed an enemy to the Father and the Son: and in a peculiar manner, an enemy to the cross of Christ. (3.) The divine glory of the atonement primarily consists in its doing infinite honour to this glorious law, thereby asserting the rights of the god-head and condemning the sin of an apostate world. (4.) He therefore who is blind to the beauty of the divine nature, the excellency of the divine law, and the great evil of sin, must of necessity be blind to the glory of the atonement. (5.) Yea, he who does not view the divine law as glorious, worthy to be magnified and made honourable, can see no reason why it was honoured on the cross of Christ. And so can see no wisdom, nor any other divine perfection, in the death of an incarnate God. (6.) Until the divine perfections exhibited to view on the cross are seen, and seen in their glory, the gospel will not be believed with all the heart, nor will those holy affections which constitute the christian character,

character, be produced by it. And *if our gospel is bid, it is bid to them that are lost.* (7.) It must be entirely owing to a supernatural, divine influence, that a mind alienated from, and at enmity against God's character and law, becomes struck with the beauty and charmed with the glory of each, as honoured with the highest honours on the cross of Christ. And therefore, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

THESE, together with that whole system of sentiments in close connection with these, contained in the preceding essay, will follow, if Christ died because the law was good, to do it honour.——To grant that Christ died for this end, and to deny the consequences, is to be inconsistent.——To deny that Christ died for this end, inevitably leads to infidelity. To say, that Christ did not die because the law was good, to do it honour; is to say, there was no good reason for his death. To say, he died because the law was bad, to get it repealed, is to offer a reason worse than none. And to say either; is to say, that christianity is not from God.

IT remains therefore that there is no consistent medium between the ancient apostolic christianity, and down-right infidelity.——And accordingly.

IN strict truth, in the sight of God, who searcheth the heart, there are but two sorts of men in christendom; and at the day of judgment, it will appear so to all the world. Now we are divided into a great variety of sects and parties, but then of all these sects and parties, there will appear to be but two sorts of men; *believers* and *unbelievers*. And then that most remarkable saying of Jesus Christ, will take effect, and be fulfilled. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

No man on earth, or angel in Heaven, has a right to vary or alter the true gospel of Jesus Christ, to accommodate it to the notions of the learned, or to the experiences of the unlearned. Nay, by the spirit of inspiration, which is in effect the same as if God himself had spoken with an audible voice from Heaven, St. Paul with the utmost solemnity, once and again, declared, as it were to the whole christian world in a body, that "if any man or angel shall preach any other gospel, let him be ACCURSED."——And all who, with St. Paul, sincerely love the gospel of Christ, as it is, must
there

therefore stand ready from the heart to say, AMEN.
For

As the gospel is one harmonious, connected whole ; so he who alters it in any single point, to be consistent, must alter the whole : that is, must give up that whole system of truths, and substitute in its room, a whole system of lies ; a system subversive of, and directly contrary to the whole gospel of Christ. For instance ; he who denies the character of the father, must deny the character and office of the son, and of the Holy Ghost. For if the father is not in himself infinitely worthy of our supreme love previous to the consideration of our being pardoned, the divine law, which requires this, previous to that consideration, was not good. The death of Christ, then, to do it honour, was needless. And the regenerating influences of the holy spirit to bring us to view God in this light, there was no occasion for ; if there is no amiableness in the divine nature previous to the consideration of his being my reconciled friend. And if my want of love, and all my disaffection to the divine character arises simply from considering him as my enemy, let him but declare himself my friend, and I shall love him, with that kind of love which alone is his due. For it is natural to those who are *born of the flesh* to love a friend and benefactor. *For sinners love those that love them.* And if my disaffection to the Deity results only from his being my enemy ; then, as the breach began on his side, so it belongs to him to retract first. And if he loves me, I shall love him. No mediator or sanctifier is needed in the case. So the whole gospel is overthrown. The sinner is justified, God and his law condemned. The same may be said of every false scheme of religion. He who denies one single truth, let him be consistent, and he must deny the whole. And he who believes one error, let him be consistent, and he must believe a whole system of lies. And it was in this view, that *St. Paul* pronounced the man or angel *accursed*, who should preach *another gospel*. Because, if his *other gospel* was true, *Christ is dead in vain*, and the whole of christianity is overthrown. *Gal. ii. 21.* And as this was the case, with the false scheme, which *St. Paul* then opposed ;

posed ; so it is equally true, as to every false scheme, which has been advanced since. For as it is enmity to the true gospel, which is contrary to every vicious bias in the human heart, that is the source of every false gospel, which is adapted to justify our corruptions : (*John* iii. 19, 20, 21.) so of course, every false gospel is in its own nature contrary to, and subversive of the true. But he who hates the true gospel of Christ so entirely, that he would overthrow the whole of it, were he able, as he is a thorough enemy to God and to his son ; so *St. Paul's* sentence against him, *let him be accursed*, is not more severe than that of his master's, *he that believeth shall be not damned*. A sentence, which, when it comes to be put in execution at the day of judgment, will meet with universal approbation and applause from all holy beings in the universe. As this is the most important subject in the world, and as we are all infinitely interested in it ; so it demands the most serious consideration, and impartial, and strict examination of all the professors of christianity. He therefore that *bath ears to hear*, *let him hear*.

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